

CONQUERING
SUCCESS

Or Life in Earnest

by *William Mathews*

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BY

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*Author of "Getting on in the World," "Words ; their Use
and Abuse," "Oratory and Orators," etc., etc.*



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

The Riverside Press, Cambridge

1903

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Published October, 1903

PREFACE

THIRTY years ago the author of this book ventured with many misgivings to enter the field of letters with a volume entitled "Getting on in the World; or Hints on Success in Life." One result of the success of the work, which had a very large and rapid sale, and was translated into several foreign languages, was that he was asked by a number of editors of magazines and newspapers to contribute to their publications articles similar in character to the contents of that book. The present work is made up in a large degree of papers written in response to these requests; and the author here thanks the publishers of "The Saturday Evening Post," Philadelphia, "Success," New York, "Forward," Philadelphia, "The Standard," Chicago, and "The Golden Rule" and its successor, "The Christian Endeavor World," Boston, for their kind permissions to reprint the articles—all of which have been revised and more or less enlarged—in this volume.

The most grateful return the author has received for the labor expended upon his former book has been, not its pecuniary rewards, but the multitude of letters that have come from persons of all ages and

callings thanking him for the inspiration and encouragement which the work has given them. Should the present book prove similarly helpful, he will consider himself abundantly rewarded for the toil of its production.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. SUCCESS IN LIFE — ITS VALUE AND ITS DIFFICULTY	1
II. LUCK, GOOD AND BAD	18
III. CHOICE OF A CALLING	28
IV. HEALTH, BODILY AND MENTAL	41
V. THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF INVALIDS	54
VI. UNITY OF AIM	67
VII. ENERGY	78
VIII. LIVE MEN WANTED	99
IX. THOROUGHNESS	106
X. STRENGTH OF WILL AND DECISION	114
XI. BE, AND RELY UPON, YOURSELF	125
XII. PLUCK	138
XIII. TENACITY OF PURPOSE	146
XIV. A TALENT FOR WORK	162
XV. THE FORMATION OF HABITS	173
XVI. THE VALUE OF PATIENCE	178
XVII. THE VALUE OF READINESS	184
XVIII. THE POTENCY OF MANNER	195
XIX. PRACTICAL TALENT	203
XX. SELF-ASSURANCE	211
XXI. THE WEALTH OF ECONOMY	217
XXII. THE WEALTH IN SPARE MOMENTS	229
XXIII. LIBERALITY IN BUSINESS	240
XXIV. ATTENTION TO LITTLE THINGS	245
XXV. CULTIVATE CHEERFULNESS	251
XXVI. OPPORTUNITY	260
XXVII. "THE NEW CUT"	267

XXVIII. THE BLESSEDNESS OF TOIL . . .	275
XXIX. STARTING IN A CALLING . . .	287
XXX. SMALL BEGINNINGS . . .	294
XXXI. THE VALUE OF CHARACTER . . .	306
XXXII. FIND OUT YOUR WEAK POINTS . . .	314
XXXIII. WORKING BY RULE . . .	319
XXXIV. THE EVILS OF HURRY . . .	325
XXXV. "SHORT CUTS" . . .	333
XXXVI. LIONS IN THE WAY . . .	340
XXXVII. "NO CHANCE TO GET ON" . . .	348
XXXVIII. SHYNESS A FOE TO SUCCESS . . .	355
XXXIX. LITTLE HINDRANCES TO SUCCESS . . .	368
XL. SPECTRAL DISCOURAGEMENTS . . .	377
XLI. BE HOPEFUL . . .	387

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CHAPTER I

SUCCESS IN LIFE — ITS VALUE AND ITS DIFFICULTY

“ He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all.”

MARQUIS OF MONTROSE.

“ A true and noble success is within the reach of every man.” —
HORACE GREELEY.

SUCCESS in life is an object of almost universal desire. It is the prize for which men of all professions are contending, — the object for which heads are aching, hearts are panting, hands are working, in all countries and in all ages. Yet, keenly as it is coveted, there are writers who sneer at it and at those who point out the ways of obtaining it. Men who have written on “Self-Help,” and the art of “Getting on in the World,” have been characterized as authors who have “bowed the knee to the Moloch of Success,” and who have taught, explicitly or implicitly, “the most absolute selfishness.” A recent Scotch writer complains that failure has not its Plutarch as well as success. “The life of the barrister who was *not* made Lord Chancellor, the life of the curate who did *not* become Bishop of London, the life of the soldier who died a plain lieutenant, are lives,” he says, “that I should

like to know a little more about." As if anything could be more depressing, — more fatal to all aspiration, hope, or enthusiasm, — than such biographies! That success may be won too dearly, — that it is a positive loss instead of a gain, when attained at the cost of higher interests, — is, indeed, most true; but to win it by legitimate means is not only justifiable, but a duty and an honor. Individual success is essential to the common weal; it implies an increased subjection of the earth to man, a multiplication of the means of common enjoyment, and an improvement of the arts which exalt and embellish life. To prostrate one's self before what success has won, be it power, riches, or luxury, it has been justly said, is flunkeyism; but to honor the qualities that have won success fairly, is worthy worship, not to be condemned or restrained. It is veneration for that type of manhood which most nearly approaches the divine, by reason of its creative energy.

We do not hesitate, therefore, to say that we have great respect for the men who have "come to the front" in the various callings of life, in spite of the sneers to which they are sometimes subjected. Some years ago, in the days of the Hudsons and the Fisks, it was the fashion to revile success as an imposture. To honor those who had won it was regarded as abjectness. But such views cannot prevail long, because they are based on an erroneous opinion of the motives which impel men to strive for money or honor. In the great majority of cases it is not selfishness chiefly which spurs a man on and bids him "spurn delights and live laborious days" to win success, but regard for others as well as for himself, — for his wife and children, or for the father and mother who have reared

him, and perhaps made sacrifices for his sake. If he has been liberally educated, he is anxious to wreak the power he feels within him upon some high course of professional action ; to justify to himself and others the propriety of his long, solitary labors, by showing an abundance of valuable fruits from them ; or, again, to vindicate his own conscious superiority against the neglect of society.

Even when the motive for exertion is selfish, it is not generally selfishness of the baser kind, — that he may outshine other men or roll in luxury. Success to most men means a tight house, clothing for all weathers, an abundance of nutritious food, the best medical attendance, newspapers and magazines, a good seat in the concert-hall or lecture-room, in church, and in the steam-cars, the ability to rest when weary in body or mind, and, above all, personal independence and self-respect. To a well-educated man success means a great deal more. It means books, pictures, and music ; intercourse with clever, cultivated, and well-bred people ; the privilege of resting in summer, and of traveling in his own and foreign lands ; in short, the indulgence of the intellectual tastes which an advanced civilization creates and fosters, but which can be gratified only by those who are born rich, or who win riches by the pursuit of their callings. The love of money may be “*a root*,” as the Bible declares, — that is, *one* of the roots, — of all evil ; but it is the root of a prodigious amount of good, too ; and the value of money was never before so great as to-day. As civilization advances, science multiplies with ever-increasing rapidity the comforts and luxuries of life, and money is the magician that places them at our command. It is precisely because success to-day means

so much more than ever before, because life with it is so rich in possibilities, that it was never before so dazzling and desirable, never so earnestly coveted and striven for, as now.

Never before in the world's history have the rewards of success, the incentives to effort, been so great and dazzling as to-day. This is the age of great trust companies and syndicates, with many millions of capital; and men of great intellectual power are required to perform their work and supervise their operations. The president of one American insurance company has the princely salary of \$100,000 a year. A multimillionaire pays the chairman of an investment committee which he employs a salary of \$125,000 a year. The superintendent of a metropolitan department store is paid \$25,000 annually for his services. The "buyer" of another store has a salary of \$16,000, besides an interest in the profits. The superintendent of the Underground Rapid Transit Road in New York has been engaged for twenty years, at an annual salary of \$20,000. There are canvassers for American insurance companies that receive \$10,000 and even \$25,000 a year for their services. The ingenuity and labor of inventors are rewarded as never before. What incomes are derived even from petty contrivances that are found useful to everybody! A barber in New Jersey invents an improved shears for hair-clipping and gets rich. A stylographic pen gives an income of \$200,000 a year for several years. A new patented umbrella frame yields a fortune of \$850,000. The invention of a metal plate for boot-soles yields a fortune still larger.

On the other hand, never before was success, especially high success, so hard to win. Never before in

the world's history since "Adam delved and Eve span" was competition in every calling and pursuit so fierce and intense as to-day; never did success, except in a very moderate degree, exact for its attainment such a union of bodily and mental qualities — of alertness, activity, enterprise, prudence, persistence, daring, and decision—as in this first decade of the twentieth century. The stern Darwinian law of plants and brute animals—the survival of the fiercest and the strongest, and therefore the fittest—has become the law of human beings as well. The wretched weakling falls out of the ranks, retires from the race, or perishes by the roadside; and so by this winnowing process the number of athletes is limited to a few, and there is clear space for the combatants.

The Bible story of the pool of Bethesda, where a throng of needy creatures waited and wished, and strove to step in, but the foremost only was the happy man, where the tardy competitor complained, "While I am coming, another steppeth down before me," depicts the struggle for the blessings of life to-day. Every pool that contains the good things of life is surrounded by an eager, elbowing, hustling crowd. In the great cities, large business houses with millions of capital are underbuying and underselling the small ones, and absorbing their trade, till their proprietors are forced to give up in despair, and become clerks for the monopolists, or go into bankruptcy. If a vacant place, even an ill-paid place, in a shop, bank, or government office is advertised in the newspapers, there are hundreds of applications for it by the very next post. Only one can have it, and the lucky man is not always the most competent, but often only the promptest, most energetic, and most self-asserting.

From all the rest goes up the complaining cry, "While I am coming, another steppeth down before me."

Even those who are crowned victors in life's race attain the prizes only after a long and exhausting struggle. Men can go no longer at one leap, or with a hop, step, skip, and jump rise to a high position. The world, as Emerson says, is no longer clay, but iron, in the hands of its workers, and beginners in life have to hammer out a place for themselves by ceaseless and rugged blows. "The race of life," says Carlyle, "has become intense; the runners are treading upon each other's heels; woe be to him who stops to tie his shoe-strings!" Depend upon it, therefore, that the men who have fought their way to the front, becoming rich, powerful, or influential in spite of "those twin gaolers of the human heart, low birth and a narrow fortune," must have had many sterling qualities, even if alloyed sometimes with a considerable tincture of what the Romans called "forehead," and the moderns call "cheek." Mere quackery or charlatanism could never have won enduring success. On the other hand, those who have failed to get on have generally done so, not because they have despised the prizes of ambition as baubles not worth the effort, but from laziness, or self-indulgence, or that cowardice which, while it covets the rewards of success, shrinks from the struggles and the self-denial by which they are won.

But what *is* success in life, and who are the successful men? If one begins his career with a determination to accomplish a certain object, concentrates all his energy upon it, and finally attains it, is he not successful, whatever may afterwards befall him? Does it

matter that the object for which he has strained his energies is less important than that which some other man has attained, or that it does not yield him the enjoyment which he expected to derive from it? If I strive to attain riches, like the late Jay Gould, and win them, am I the less successful because, like him, I am afflicted with ill health, which prevents me from fully enjoying my riches, and cuts short my days? Am I less successful as a lawyer, or as a broker, because my wife is a vixen, or my children are spendthrifts? Am I less successful as a merchant because my daughter has eloped with my coachman? Most certainly not; yet many persons would seem to think I am.

There is a class of doleful moralists and religious writers, who seem to find great pleasure in descanting on "the vanity of human wishes," and the folly of men in striving strenuously for things which are, at best, but transitory possessions, and which fail to yield the coveted enjoyment. "Why," asks the great Roman satirist, Juvenal, "do you wish for wealth, which ruined Seneca; or for eloquence, which caused Demosthenes and Cicero to be assassinated; or to be a great captain, like Hannibal, who, after many victories, was defeated at last, and killed himself in exile?" In reply we ask: Did not each of these men win the very thing he aspired to win? Why, then, judge of his career by his last days only, as if its character depended solely on its final catastrophe? Why regard a man's life as successful if it end triumphantly, though for the sixty or more years preceding it may have been a constant up-hill fight, in the face of wind and sun; or as a failure if it end disastrously, though the disaster may have come, as in Hannibal's case, only after almost a whole lifetime of

brilliant successes? If a man lives seventy years, does his seventieth year contain more or less than one-seventieth part of his life; and can it affect the success or failure of that life to more than just that extent?

John William Kaye, in his admirable "Essays of an Optimist," tells of a man in London who desired to attain a certain public situation, and said to himself that he would obtain it. Night after night his way home led him down Whitehall Street, and as he passed under the shadow of the building which he aspired to enter, he would shake his fist at it and say: "You grim old pile, you exclude me now, but some day I shall have a home in you, be sure." He was right, — he won the place, and sooner than he expected. "It was nothing very great that he obtained," says Mr. Kaye; "but the success consisted in this, that what he won was the identical thing that he aspired and endeavored to obtain. It is nothing to the point that other men had won much higher posts by *their* successful exertions. Nor does it matter . . . whether he was happier than before. There may have been distressing set-offs in other directions, or the thing for which he had striven may not have satisfied him, but the positive success was there." If Hannibal and Napoleon sought to be great captains, and became such, were they less really successful because they ultimately met with reverses in war, and died ingloriously? Was William Pitt, who early aspired to become the prime minister and parliamentary leader of Great Britain, unsuccessful, because his brilliant effort to crush the hydra-headed power of Napoleon was defeated by the victory at Austerlitz, and, chagrined and disappointed, the proud statesman sank under the

blow? If Pitt won what he had coveted, the highest station in the kingdom, — was first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, — was his life a failure, albeit he died of a broken heart? Because, again, the object of a man's pursuit, when gained, has disappointed him, — because, as Byron says, —

“ The lovely toy, so fiercely sought,
Hath lost its charm by being caught,” —

is his success less positive? Is not success one thing, and happiness another?

“ But what is the secret of this success to which we all aspire?” asks a young reader. “ *How* shall I get on in the world? What are the qualities needed by a youth who would follow his calling with credit to himself and usefulness to his fellow-men?” These are questions which will clamor for solution by every thoughtful young man, as he leaves the parental roof, and launches out upon the changeful sea of professional or business life.

During the last few years many men who have won high distinction in their callings have been interviewed by newspaper correspondents and others, who have interrogated them regarding the secrets of their respective successes. In the great majority of cases their replies have been utterly unsatisfactory. Their explanations of their achievements have consisted of generalities that conveyed no information, revealed no secrets, solved no enigmas, and threw no light on the art of getting on in the world. Of course, to all successful men of high or low degree there are some qualities and some methods that are common, — energy, decision, persistence, *et cetera*, — without which signal success is almost impossible. But it needs no

ghost to tell us of these, and yet the enumeration of them is about the sum total of the information communicated by the giants of trade, invention, speculation, and professional life. The mystery of the man's triumphs is left as hidden as before the oracle spoke; nor, from the nature of the case, can it be otherwise.

A great captain, merchant, lawyer, composer, inventor does not know, and therefore cannot tell, the secret of his mastery, why he distanced all competitors. A hundred elements of success entered into his operations, unconsciously to himself, all together forming an instinct which led him unerringly to the mark, but many of them too subtle for scrutiny and incommunicable to another man. To say that he took more pains than other men explains nothing. The question still arises, Why did he take more pains? Even Napoleon felt the gift of great generalship to be inexplicable, for when a flatterer undertook to extol his mastery of the art of war he cut him short with the exclamation, "*Mon Dieu ! c'est ma nature ; je suis fait comme ça.*" It was "his nature;" he "was made" to win battles and campaigns, — that was all he could say about the matter. To himself his victories were no marvel. Of course, Napoleon, like every other great commander, had to undergo an apprenticeship to his art and to perform vast labors of preparation for his campaigns, to make his gift of military genius effective, but the disposition to do this was as instinctive as the gift itself.

The same principles hold with regard to the art of winning wealth. It has been justly said that, with the exception of the men who make a fortune by a single bold speculation, there is probably not a single millionaire who can tell satisfactorily just how he became

rich. No doubt they all think they can tell; but in fact no one of them can put his finger on the quality, or name the precise combination of qualities, required to make a Cræsus, a Rothschild, or a Rockefeller. "A man with the money-making talent certainly knows 'a good thing' — that is, a desirable investment or venture — when he sees it. How he knows it he cannot explain. In fact, there is no talent which is so deeply hidden away in the depths of a man's mental and moral constitution. . . . In every calling success is a personal attribute, a something which comes out of a man's brain and character, and which he can neither share, transmit, nor explain." We talk of certain rules, by the observance of which the man of average ability may hope to win success; but for men of a certain constitution there are no rules. For the man of iron frame and quick pulsing blood, of fierce, indomitable perseverance, of mingled audacity and coolness, and especially of a grim, combative religiosity which deepens and concentrates while it sobers all eager acquisitive longings, — for such a man now, as in all ages past, it has been truly said that all the world is a prey. "The industrial age is like the age of war. A Napoleon would be the first man in any peaceful profession which he might adopt. But men of this stamp, even if it be the highest, are, for that very reason, rare. It is said that one family of tigers requires a beat as large as Middlesex." But to the mass of men — to all but one in a hundred thousand or more — success is not thus pre-assured. It is a prize for which, whatever their natural gifts, they must struggle long and late.

Speaking ideally, we should say that the successful man — or, at least, the eminently successful man —

must be a complete paradox. He must be, as Napoleon once said, "sometimes very bold and sometimes very prudent." He must be patient and yet persistent. He must be obstinate and he must be pliant, — obstinate, to stick to his purpose; pliant, to be able to accommodate himself to the sinuosities, the crooks and turns, of life. He must be conciliating and imperative, for he must use the arts both of persuasion and of command. He must be high-minded and honorable, but not fastidiously nice or over-scrupulous, for prudery is failure in every walk of life. In short he must be a bundle of contradictions, a harmony of discords, a being born under the contending influences of Mercury and Saturn. So much for the ideal qualities of the successful man. But, practically, these qualities admit of much abatement. Thousands of men have been brilliantly successful who have lacked many of them in a greater or less degree; who have possessed, apparently, neither fine talents nor educational discipline, helping friends nor any other signal advantages. But what is imperatively necessary is an earnest, determined, labor-loving, and wide-awake mind, a disposition to make the most of present circumstances, turning everything to account, and yet, while straining every muscle and sinew, looking forward with eager eye, ready to grasp every opportunity which the future may present.

The modes in which men win success are fortunately almost infinitely diversified, though there are certain ruling qualities common to them all. Some men, ordinarily indolent or negligent, have fits and starts of activity, when they break out in sallies of fortunate boldness, — working double tides, and concentrating years of labor into months, — and absolve their race

for power or fame by a series of irregular but giant bounds. Among eminent writers Byron was such a man. He had a volcanic brain, which, in one of its eruptions, threw off "The Corsair" in ten days, and, in another, "The Bride of Abydos" in four. "I am like the tiger," he said; "if I miss the first spring, I go grumbling back to my jungle again; but if I do it, it is crushing." There are other men, who, ever ardent and impetuous, provoke opposition by their vehemence, or overreach the mark, yet succeed in the end. Another class, coldly cautious and silently persevering, seem to weary out the jealousy of fortune by their untiring vigilance and unconquerable patience. Again, there are those who are characterized by an exquisite delicacy of perception and of contrivance, — by a tremulous sensibility which is alive to the most hidden dangers, and a nicety and dexterity of hand that can unravel the most knotty and perplexing difficulties. Finally, there is a class the very opposite of these, who win wealth, place, or honor by sheer native sense and plodding energy, which ignores all hair-splitting distinctions and over-nice scruples, and cuts the knots it cannot untie.

In reading the lives of eminent lawyers nothing strikes us with more surprise than the variety of natural and acquired gifts, plans of study, degrees of industry, and arts of advocacy, by which they gain distinction and emolument. Thurlow at Nando's coffee house, the idlest of the idle, and Eldon studying late at night, with a wet towel around his head; Murray (afterwards Lord Mansfield) practicing pleas before a looking-glass, and Wedderburn in the green-room; Saunders with a glass of brandy or "a pot of ale at his nose," and Ellenborough writing and setting be-

fore his eyes the words, "Read or starve;" Pinckney with his dandyisms and affectations, and Jeremiah Mason with his simplicity and inexorable logic; Kenyon loving the law, and Romilly hating it; Story dabbling in politics, and Choate sternly ignoring them, — cases like these seem to baffle all speculation, and to show that the ways of professional advancement are more various than we are apt to suppose. But to all classes of successful men there are some qualities which are common, — qualities without which their failure would have been assured, — and it is these qualities that we wish in this book to point out.

Before considering the elements of success, let us answer another question that confronts us here, viz., Should a young man make success in life the direct object of his endeavors, and be thinking of it and straining after it, putting it above and before all things else? Should he strive to be a chief justice, a great merchant, or the first engineer in the land? Or should he rather strive each day to do his daily task in the best possible manner, to make the most of the day's opportunities, turning everything to account without a thought — at least, without anxious thought — about attaining to riches, place, or renown? The author of "Excelsior" should be a good adviser here, and what does he say? "The talent of success," says the poet Longfellow, "is nothing more than doing what you can do well, without a thought of fame. If it come at all, it will come because it is deserved, and not because it is sought after." The perpetual thought of success is likely to be self-defeating. The man who is always gazing upward from the ladder whose rungs he is climbing at the object of his desires, pondering schemes of self-advancement, is in danger of a deadly

fall, as well as of an exhaustion which makes the object worthless when attained.

But not to theorize merely, look at the men who from the chilling depths of poverty have risen to be the admiration of the world. Did they make success the direct object of their labors, or did they seek to do conscientiously the work they had in hand, with hardly a thought of wealth, office, or fame? Did Wellington, when he defeated Napoleon's best generals in Spain, and put the keystone to the arch of his military skill at Waterloo, dream of a star and garter? Was Grant at Vicksburg and Chattanooga and Petersburg thinking of his future fame or the presidency of the United States? No; these great captains thought, each of them, only of giving the enemy a good thrashing. So with Moltke; he never, apparently, sought success as a means of self-aggrandizement. He was an artist in war, with a lofty ideal, and spared no pains to make his work as perfect as possible, with little else in view. What, again, was the motive that inspired the tireless studies of that great man and heroic soldier, Charles James Napier, the "hero of Scinde"? When he was laboriously and ceaselessly striving for fifteen years to master all the knowledge of his profession — reading works on the art of war, and making original comments for his own instruction upon the campaigns of all the great soldiers of the world, from Alexander and Hannibal to Marshal Saxe and Napoleon — did he do all this to acquire military distinction? Did he see any chance of his ever using and testing that knowledge in actual war? Not at all. Again and again he says in his diary that he thought he had none; and yet his masterly campaigns in Scinde, in one of which, with 1800 men, he defeated

a valiant army of fifteen times that number, in a battle that raged for three mortal hours, and reduced to unconditional submission the fierce tribes which from their rocky fastnesses had laughed at the attacks of other great generals for two thousand years, — these campaigns were the fruit of studies which he had made in the “piping times of peace,” a peace that bade fair to last half a century.

What a lesson for young men who are thinking only of success — perhaps immediate success — instead of doing their work faithfully day by day and hour by hour, and leaving the result with Providence! Such persons are often heard fretting and complaining of their obscurity, their slender gains, the monotony of their lives, their slow progress in the world. They do not consider in their balance-sheet of profits that, if faithful to their duties, they are gaining *character*, the most valuable of all acquisitions. Let them only see to it that they make the most of themselves while they are biding their time, by invigorating their faculties, storing their minds with knowledge, cultivating their moral natures, and mastering all the details of their calling, and they may be assured that when they are prepared for a higher place it will almost certainly be ready for them. To such men the doors of success will swing open of themselves at last, as they opened to Thorwaldsen, the sculptor, in the hour of his deepest despair. Nobody at Rome would buy his statues, and so one day he packed up his few worldly goods, resolved to return to Denmark. But on that very day an Englishman dropped into his studio, who recognized his genius, and bought the “Jason,” his great statue. The hour and the man had come, and Thor-

waldsen's fortune was made. That golden opportunity, reader, will one day come to you. Only see to it that you are ready for it when it does come. "The stone that is fit for the wall does not long lie in the ditch."

CHAPTER II

LUCK, GOOD AND BAD

"An unfortunate and an imprudent man are synonymous terms."
RICHELIEU.

"Fate is a good excuse for our own will."

"The winds and waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators." — GIBBON.

How far is worldly success or failure due to luck? There are some persons who, whatever the circumstances in which they are placed, seem doomed never to get ahead in the world. In the race for fortune or fame they are continually outstripped by other men with even inferior natural endowments and fewer helps at the start. Yet they never admit that their failure is due to their own fault. They attribute it to their hard luck, to the bad times, to the rascality of the men they have confided in, to the improper organization of society, never to their own indolence, folly, or lack of brains. Instead of resisting their downward doom, putting forth the *vivida vis animi* of him

"Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star,"

they waste their days in bemoaning their lot, and become at last the victims of chronic apathy or despair. On the other hand, men who win fortunes easily, or who have big balances at their banker's, are apt to deny the existence of luck.

That there is such a thing as luck, good or bad — meaning simply that men are sometimes aided and sometimes baffled in their efforts by agencies beyond their control or power to foresee — is indisputably true. Strictly speaking, indeed, there is no such thing as luck. Chance, fortune, etc., are ideas relative purely to our ignorance, and mean, not that certain events are regulated by no law, but simply that they are regulated by a law *which we cannot discern*. It is only the lack of sufficient knowledge, and of a calculus sufficiently powerful, that prevents us from reducing all events, even those apparently the most fortuitous, to a certainty. But, using the word “luck” to denote only something apparently, not really fortuitous, it has undoubtedly much to do with human affairs. There are times in almost every man’s life when, baffled at every turn, he would be almost forced, if he were a pagan, to believe that his career is directed by an ironical Fate, which delights to mock at all his best plans and efforts. We seem sometimes to be bound hand and foot, and delivered over to blind, impersonal, pitiless laws. The world appears to us like some vast manufactory, in which we hear incessantly the clash and whir of a huge complex machinery, over which we have no control. The man who rules the store or office which he once swept out may seem to owe his advancement wholly to his own merits ; but other boys, who also have come up to the city with their worldly goods tied up in a bandanna handkerchief, and who have worked as hard and economized as closely, have remained clerks all their days.

The ancients fully believed in destiny, and so have some great men of modern times. Alexander and Cæsar had faith in their good luck ; and Cicero tells

us that it was not only the courage, but the good fortune, of Fabius, Marcellus, Scipio, and Marius that induced the people to intrust them with the command of the Roman armies. Frederick the Great attributed his conquest of Silesia against fearful odds to a certain good fortune which often waits upon youth, and denies itself to advanced age. "Does it not seem astonishing," he asks, "that all that is most refined in human prudence, joined to force, is often the dupe of unexpected events, of a certain *I know not what*, that sports contemptuously with the projects of men?"

Cromwell had his lucky days, of which his birthday, on which he won two great battles, was one. Napoleon believed in his star. He was "the child of destiny," he said; and what men absurdly call his crimes were "a necessity." He declared that military science consists in calculating all the chances accurately in the first place, and then in giving accident exactly, almost mathematically, its place in one's calculations. "Accident, hazard, chance, whatever you choose to call it — a mystery to ordinary minds — becomes," he said, "a reality to superior men." Rothschild said that the best advice he could give a young man was: "Never have anything to do with an unlucky man. I have seen many very clever men who had not shoes to their feet. I never act with them."

Eliminate from any man's career all that can be regarded as the natural results of his conduct, and much will remain that is purely fortuitous. Who can doubt that half the battle of life is won or lost according as an individual is well or ill born, physically, mentally, and temperamentally? Certainly a good heredity and a good environment are powerful helps to success. With these one gets a happy start, a good send-off in

the world; while, if they are both bad, he is sadly handicapped. "Men," says Emerson, "are what their mothers made them. You may as well ask a loom which weaves huckaback why it does not make cashmere, as expect poetry from this engineer, or a chemical discovery from that jobber." Galton has truly observed that a certain moral temperature is necessary to develop certain talents; without it they prove abortive.

When Goethe started in his career, he had the entire civilization of Europe to back him; but what if he had been born in China, South America, or Arabia? He himself has answered the question by telling us to fancy Béranger born away from Paris and all the influences and opportunities of a world-city, — born as the son of a poor tailor at Jena or Weimar. "Let him run his wretched career in either of these two small cities, and see what fruit would have grown on such a soil, or in such an atmosphere." Again, how fortunate it was for Goethe that he was in affluent circumstances! Would he have been the many-sided man he was, had he been cramped and tortured as was Jean Paul, or cribbed and confined as were Heine and Schiller by poverty? Time, his long life, was a necessary element in Goethe's culture and achievements. A long, hard fight with adverse fortune, even if crowned at last with victory, would have deprived him of the books he needed, of access to all circles and classes of society, the means of travel, and all the other facilities he enjoyed for a rare and expensive culture, and probably would have shortened his life.

Was it not luck — both good and bad — when Cæsar Borgia, with his father, Pope Alexander the Sixth, having determined to poison Cardinal Cometto, feasted the Cardinal for that purpose, but the butler

by mistake presented the Pope and Borgia with the prepared glasses or goblets of poisoned wine, so that the would-be murderers fell into their own trap? Was it not luck when Dudley Dean, of the Rough Riders, who was in all the fighting at Las Guasimas and San Juan Hill, escaped without a wound? "The bullets," he says, "were flying all around me, for I was up in the front rank; but they either went over me or around me. I did not even get a scratch." Was not that marine marvelously lucky, of whom Rear-Admiral Sampson tells the following incident in the sea-fight at Santiago? "I noticed one man standing with his hand grasping a hammock rail as a shell struck the ship, ricocheted, and burst. One piece of the metal cut the rail on the side of his hand, another on the other side, so that he was left standing with a short section of the rail still grasped in his hand. Another portion of the shell passed over his shoulder, and another between his legs. He was surprised, but was n't hurt." Is there no fortuity in the "accidents" by which men's lives are lost or saved? Do we not see one man who sucks an orange choked by the pit, while another man swallows a penknife and lives? one scratch his finger with a pin and die of lockjaw, in spite of the utmost medical skill, and another recover after the shaft of a gig has run completely through his body? So with business and professional life. Did not L'Ecure, when young and poor, obtain the place of dentist to the king of Poland on the very day on which the king lost the last tooth in his head? Did not poor Chatterton poison himself just at the very time when the feet of one who would have relieved his poverty were turned toward the street in which he died?

Was it not luck when Justin Martyr was converted through a chance meeting with an aged and kindly Christian believer? Did not Faust discover the art of printing by looking at the prints of his horse's shoes in the soil, before mounting him? Was not the suspension bridge suggested to Samuel Brown by the sight of a spider's web? Did not Sir Charles Eastlake owe his first rise in his profession to a chance, which he seized, of painting a portrait of the first Napoleon? What shall we say of the case of Peter Carr, an inmate of the County Poorhouse in New Platz, N. Y., who on October 10, 1897, fell into the Delaware and Hudson Canal, and was drowned, — directed to whom came a letter the very next day, enclosing a check for \$2000, which was his share of a deceased sister's estate? Was it not lucky for Daniel Webster that Hayne made his onslaught on New England, the masterly reply to which won for its champion undying fame? Some years before this occasion, Webster had made a profound study of the main subjects discussed in Hayne's speech, and had his notes, as he afterward told a friend, tucked away in a pigeon-hole; and "when Hayne made that attack on me and upon New England," said he, "I was already posted, and had only to take down my notes, and refresh my memory. In other words, if he had tried to make a speech to fit my notes, he could not have hit it better."

Let us acknowledge, therefore, that there is an element of chance in human affairs, — that man is, to some extent, the victim of circumstances. His ablest efforts are sometimes rendered abortive by a counter-tide of disaster which he has not set flowing, and which he can neither stem nor turn. But let us remember that he is endowed with the power of acting upon cir-

cumstances, and oftentimes shaping them to his will. They are the wind and tide in the voyage of life, which the skillful mariner counts upon and uses to his advantage. As Burke says: "You have only to get into the trade-wind, and you sail secure over the Pactolian sands." Life, as Walter Scott wrote to a young friend, is like a game of cards: our hands are alternately good and bad, and the whole seems, at first glance, to depend on mere chance. But it is not so; for, in the long run, the skill of the players predominates over the casualties of the game. In a vast majority of cases a man may make his own circumstances. "Fortune," said one of Napoleon's marshals, Marmont, "may once or twice overwhelm with her favors a man who is not worthy of them; she may betray the finest combinations of genius, and humble a noble character; but when the struggle is prolonged, when events are multiplied, the man of true talents infallibly conquers her favors." "Luck," says Cobden, "is ever waiting for something to turn up. Labor, with keen eyes and strong will, turns up something."

The true way to deal with adverse circumstances is to be a still greater circumstance yourself. Nine out of ten of the men who have been successful in their callings have fought the battle of life up-hill. Instead of bemoaning their hard lot, they have bowed to the inevitable, and sought to turn it to their advantage. Instead of begging for an impossible chess-board, they have taken the one before them and played the game. The block of granite which was an obstacle in the path of the weak they have converted into a stepping-stone to a higher place. Why does Cæsar's triumphant career give us an impression of predestination, even in its most trivial incidents? It was not through

luck, although he believed in it, but, as De Quincey says, simply through the perfection of his preparations, arrayed against all conceivable contingencies, — and which make him appear like some incarnate providence, veiled in a human form, ranging through the ranks of the legions, — that he was enabled to triumph over all his foes. Look at that tireless worker, Lord Brougham. Can any one believe that by any combination of circumstances his talents could have been kept from asserting themselves and winning recognition? It has been said that if his station had been that of a shoeblick, he would never have rested content till he had become the first shoeblick in England. The luck of Napoleon and Nelson consisted, they said, in being a quarter of an hour before their time. When, in the darkest hour of the Indian Mutiny, a handful of Englishmen, poorly armed and provisioned, but splendidly led, won eight victories in succession, the revolted Sepoys said their conquerors had “the devil’s luck;” but the only luck in the case was that of force of will, invincible courage, and skill in arms.

The great mass of failures in life are due not to adverse fortune, but to some hidden defect of character, same imperceptible flaw in the brain. “A good character, good habits, and iron industry,” says Addison, “are impregnable to the assaults of all the ill luck that fools ever dreamed of.” Let every beginner in business remember that, though “outward accidents conduce much of fortune’s favor, such as opportunity, death of others, occasion fitting virtue,” yet these accidents cannot avail him unless he has the ability to take advantage of them. Chance may bring a man a fine opportunity, open the door to a desirable position; but of what use is the opportunity if, like thousands

of other men, he fails to perceive it, or hesitates and dawdles till it is gone? Of what advantage would Hayne's fiery speech have been to Daniel Webster if he had not, with the instinct of genius, long before equipped himself for the assault which he repelled with such crushing energy? Had he not previously weighed and refuted in his own mind the charges of his opponent, his reply, instead of ranking among the greatest masterpieces of oratory, might have only revealed his own weakness. We hear a great deal about the good luck of inventors. Some of their most wonderful and useful discoveries seem to have been due to accident. Such was the discovery by Edison of the carbon by which he perfected his telephone. The great inventor scraped some soot from the blackened chimney of his laboratory lamp, and in a spirit of curiosity tested its properties. It proved to be the very thing for which he was searching. But such accidents never happen to common men, nor to any but those who are looking for them. Behind this fortunate discovery was a series of exhausting and exhaustive experiments with all kinds of likely materials, absorbing the energies of Edison for many months. Other men might have encountered the same facts; but only the eye made eager by the strain of long watching would be quick to note their meaning. In short, the lucky hit rewarded the persistent energy of a patient workman. So with another, one of the greatest of all discoveries. Thousands of men had seen the prints of a horse's hoofs in the soil before Faust discovered by them the art of printing. So, again, with the young and obscure lawyer who conducts and wins a difficult case, as did Thomas Erskine, in his elder's illness; or the struggling surgeon who has a sudden

chance of distinction offered to him ; he must have had a long and laborious preparatory training before he can profit by such an emergency. In short, a great opportunity is worth to a man precisely what his antecedents have enabled him to make of it.

Finally, win what position you may by luck, you cannot *hold* it except by capacity and energy. In the keen competition of life a man's claims are adjudicated, sooner or later, upon the basis of what he actually is. The only true index of his success is the quality of his work. "No man," says a wise writer, "who holds his position by mere tact, by the good will of others, by friendly influence, has any real foothold in life ; he may be swept away in a moment. The time will come when tact will prove unequal to the strain of the situation, when friendly influence will prove unavailing, when the fortunate combinations cannot be made. He only is secure whose work is stamped with honesty and competency. He depends for his position in life on something which is a part of himself, not upon extraneous combinations of circumstances. *Put your strength into the doing of your work*, and the question of stability and success will settle itself."

CHAPTER III

CHOICE OF A CALLING

"Every man has his own vocation. The talent is the call. . . . Do that which is assigned to you, and you cannot hope too much, or dare too much." — EMERSON.

NEED we say that a wise choice of one's calling is essential, as a rule, to high success in life? As a plant cannot flourish in a temperature contrary to its nature, as an Arctic animal droops and dies in a tropical climate, so is it with our mental and moral qualities; they require for a vigorous growth a suitable atmosphere. The man who would thrive in his calling must choose one which will enable him to follow the natural bent of his mind — to exercise and gratify his predominant faculty, his ruling passion. If you have a strong original inclination or fondness for a certain pursuit, you will not have to force yourself to discharge even its difficult duties; that natural bias will insure the intensest application to it as a matter of course. Emerson justly insists that every man has his own appointed vocation, appointed by the peculiar talent with which he is endowed. "There is one direction," says the Concord sage, "in which all space is open to him. He is like a ship in a river; he runs against obstructions on every side, but one; on that side all obstruction is taken away, and he sweeps serenely over a deepening channel into an infinite sea." On the other hand, a man is but half a man, when he

is working "against the grain" of his nature,—when his whole soul is constantly protesting against his occupation. Biography teems with proof of this. The men who have made their mark in the world have differed from those who have lived and died in obscurity, not more in mental power than in early self-knowledge and perception of their inborn aptitudes. See the boy Murillo filling the margins of his school-books with drawings; Michael Angelo in childhood neglecting school to copy drawings which he dares not bring home; the little Handel stealing midnight interviews with a smuggled clavichord in a secret attic; the young Faraday making an electric machine out of a bottle; Claude Lorraine sketching in his teens flour and charcoal pictures on the walls of a pastry-cook's shop; Chantrey, the predestined sculptor, carving in his boyhood the head of "old Fox," his schoolmaster, in a bit of pine wood! Were not the greatness of John Hunter, the celebrated anatomist and surgeon, and the choice of his calling, shadowed forth in youth by his observations on the incubated egg? Were not the great paintings of West the natural outcome of the fly so naturally counterfeited by him on a sheet of paper when a boy? Even when confronted with the most determined resistance, those inborn constitutional aptitudes will overcome all opposition, and manifest themselves in the divinely appointed way. In vain was the law chosen as the pursuit for Haydn, when his soul was bursting with song; stealing away from his family into a retired apartment of his home, he spent the livelong night with his harp. In vain did the parents of young Smeaton strive to change the current of his thoughts when he was working with tools while his companions were at play. To dry law studies, against

which every impulse of his nature rebelled, they compelled him to apply himself, until at last, weary of fruitless efforts to thwart the bent of his genius, the father abandoned the incorrigible boy to the dominant force of his being, and, lo! amid the raging waters of the sea arose the Eddystone Lighthouse, a miracle of engineering skill. Who is that other boy, who, in spite of whippings upon whippings, keeps his lonely vigils in the steeple of the parish church, watching the stars in their courses through the sky? It is the Abbé La Castile, destined to be the first astronomer of his time.

William Pitt, the "great Commoner," was but seven years old when he told his tutor how glad he was that he was not the eldest son, for he "wanted to speak in the House of Commons like papa." The late Lord Westbury, Lord High Chancellor of England, was but five years old when his profession was decided upon and his future eminence foretold. Daniel Webster was but eight when he saw in a country shop a cotton handkerchief with the Constitution of the United States printed on both sides of it, and emptied his pockets of his hoarded pennies to buy it. That night, on the kitchen floor, before the roaring chimney fire, he absorbed its contents into his brain and blood, and from that hour was the predestined "great expounder" and defender of that instrument against its misinterpreters, violators, and foes. So many young men to-day drift helplessly and hopelessly into their life-pursuits that the word "vocation" or "calling" has almost become a misnomer; but who can doubt that Sergeant S. Prentiss heard in youth a voice summoning him to the forum and the platform? When he addressed a large public assembly he experi-

enced an electrical excitement, at times almost maddening, and seemed to himself to be rather spoken from than speaking. New thoughts came rushing into his mind unbidden, which surprised himself as much as his hearers, and which he said he could no more reproduce than he could make a world.

Will you say that these boys were all prodigies, boys of rare and exceptional genius, and that in ninety-nine out of a hundred youths the bent of their talents is far less distinctly marked? No doubt; but though less decided, it still in most boys exists; and every one should study himself till he learns for what calling nature has designed him. What can be more painful than to discover by many failures and blunders, after you have fixed yourself in the groove in which you must run for the rest of your days, that you have mistaken your profession? Waste, it is said, is the law of the world; but of all forms of waste, what is more conspicuous in all ranks of society, what more painful to behold, than the waste of talents? How melancholy it is to see men plodding drearily year after year, and all their lives, at tasks for which they have neither genius nor love,—cutting blocks with razors; doing, or attempting to do, fine work with broadaxes; fighting the battle of life with the left hand only, or with one hand tied; rowing against wind and tide; getting their livings by their weakness, and not by their strength! Instead of working in the direction to which their natural abilities point, thus presenting themselves with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation, they “present the adopted talent of another, of which they have only an extemporaneous half possession.” Thus defeat, or at best a sham success, is foreshadowed from the very start.

"The curse of England," writes Macaulay to his sister, "is the obstinate determination of the middle classes to make their sons what they call gentlemen. So we are overrun by clergymen without livings, lawyers without briefs, authors without readers, clerks soliciting employment, who might have thriven as bakers, watchmakers, or innkeepers." Is not this equally true of America? If there is one fact established by biography, it is that no man struggles perpetually and victoriously against his own nature or character; that if we would acquit ourselves well in life, we must so choose and regulate our career as to be aided by our physical constitution and natural inclinations, instead of striving against them.

"I do not forbid you to preach," said a discerning bishop to a candidate for the ministry, "but nature does." What an egregious mistake it would have been if John Philpot Curran, the eloquent and eminently successful advocate, had adopted the clerical profession, as his loving Protestant mother desired! "Oh, Jacky, Jacky," she used to exclaim, even when he was at the height of his fame at the bar, "what a preacher was lost in you!" She was mistaken. "Jacky" overflowed with wit, humor, and jocularly, and was subject to fits of extreme depression of spirits, both of which traits would have been fatal to his success in the ministry. What a wretched life was that of Haydon, the painter! A man of great, almost first-rate ability, he failed in his career — and why? Not, as he thought, through the world's injustice or insensibility, of which he was perpetually complaining, but because he chose the wrong means of making his ability felt and acknowledged. His bitter disappointment, his lifelong succession of half-successes, worse than

defeats, were due to the initial error of mistaking a passion for a power. "A fine critic, a vivid sketcher of character, and a writer of singular clearness, point, and eloquence, was spoiled to make an artist, sometimes noble in conception, but without sense of color, and utterly inadequate to any but the most confused expression of himself by the pencil."

Contrast this melancholy career with those of the men who have known their own gifts and done the work which nature assigned to them, and it will be seen that the men who have made their mark in the world have differed from those who have failed, not more in mental power than in their self-knowledge and perception of their inborn aptitudes. Mendelssohn was but sixteen when he read Wieland's Shakespeare, and, with all the vigor of the eagle sunning his newly perfected pinions, threw off the immortal overture to "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The crude charcoal sketches of Sir Joshua Reynolds in his boyish days — "done," his unsympathetic father said, "out of sheer idleness" — foreshadowed the future master of portrait painting. The truant Tom Gainsborough, strolling along the green lanes and by the hedgerows of Sudbury, and sitting among the flapping dock leaves to draw, indicated even then the first English painter of English landscape, one of whose pictures sold recently for fifty-two thousand five hundred dollars. We are told that even at the age of seven the favorite amusement of the future eloquent preacher at St. Paul's, Canon Liddon, was to robe himself in a copy of *The Times* and preach to his playmates.

Need we say to any thoughtful young man, avoid an unhealthy calling, one in which the work kills the workman. All occupations that involve the breathing

of impure air or poisonous gases, or the inhaling of filings from brass or steel, or dust from coal mines and threshing-machines, or chemical poisons should be shunned. Worse — infinitely worse — than these callings are those morally baleful ones which dwarf one's manhood, impoverish and shrivel his moral nature, and call into play his lower and baser faculties, — his cunning, artifice, and skill in deceit.

Find out early, therefore, what nature designed you to be — whether a lawyer, doctor, preacher, trader, or mechanic — and strive assiduously to qualify yourself for the discharge of the duties of your calling. Be careful not to mistake a hasty impulse, a shallow temporary liking, for a real bent or deep love for a vocation; and on the other hand, when you have pursued any business for some years, and found that it has many difficulties, trials, and perplexities of which you had not dreamed, do not hastily abandon it for another — thus throwing away most of the knowledge and experience acquired — with the expectation of finding your pathway in the latter strewn with roses without any thorns. All callings that are worth pursuing are alike in this, that not one of them is easy. All of them, whatever the inducements they may offer, have, without exception, compensating drawbacks, thorns as well as roses. In not one of them can success be won by treading "the primrose path of dalliance." Nothing can be more unwise, therefore, than for a man who has followed a calling for eight, ten, or more years to abandon it for another, because he has found that many of its duties are distasteful. To make such a change is bad economy of money and of time. It is to throw away all his dearly acquired experience, all the progress he has made in his present pursuit,

and go back to the beginning for a fresh start. The different professions, it has been truly said, are not parallel tracks, where you can be switched from one to another without loss of progress, but rather tracks radiating from a common centre. To pass from one to another you must in each case go back to the original station. You must begin your career anew.

Only after repeated failures, following the most earnest and persistent efforts to succeed, should a change be made. Remember, too, that those kinds of business which pay best in the long run are the slowest in beginning to yield a return. Success in them is like the growth of the aloe — for a long time slow and imperceptible. For years you perceive no change; then all at once, when the time comes, there is a crisis, and it shoots up a stalk ten or fifteen feet high, hung with innumerable flowers. Stick, then, if possible, to your chosen calling, lest it be said of you, as of a character in Owen Meredith's "Lucile," —

"With irresolute finger he knocked at each one
Of the doorways of life, but abided at none;
His course by each star that crossed it was set,
And whatever he did he was sure to regret."

Of course, there are extreme cases, where a man's calling has been chosen by his parents, in spite of his utter lack of aptitude for it, and manifest bent for another, or where circumstances, early associations, or a boyish freak or whim have forced or tempted him into an uncongenial pursuit. In such cases, where the square man has got into the round hole, or the round man into the triangular, a change may be an absolute necessity. Thus Boileau, who was educated for the bar, and who in pleading his first cause broke down amid shouts of laughter, and who next tried the pul-

pit, and failed there, too, finally tried poetry, and became a French classic. So Fontenelle, Voltaire, and Montesquieu all failed at the bar, but, devoting themselves to the more congenial pursuit of literature, won a world-wide fame, the second becoming the literary potentate of his age. But these were cases of misplaced men of extraordinary gifts unmistakably qualifying and urging them to a particular pursuit, cases very different from that of the average man, who has his bent, it is true, but no overwhelming bias, fitness, or proclivity for one, and only one, pursuit.

As regards the vexations, annoyances, and perplexities of your pursuit, let us say to every discontented young man, you may rely upon it that, as we have said already, the same, or others equally tormenting, will confront you in every calling. They are incident to our lot as imperfect beings. By flying from your present pursuit to a different one, you will only exchange one set of trials for another perhaps still harder to bear. It is, therefore, the very wantonness of folly to brood and sigh over "the disagreeables" of your present calling, and fly to others that you know not of. Remember that the man remains the same in every calling, and that, if he has any inherent weakness or vulnerable point, he does not overcome it by a "change of base." Accept your profession as a man accepts a piece of rugged ground which he has to till, and confront your hardships as he sets to work to get out its stumps, rocks, and roots, to deepen and enrich the soil. A little heart-varnish will cover a multitude of evils and defects. A man's choice of a calling must be wretched indeed, if years of devotion to it do not make it pleasant at last, — if patient, pertinacious, energetic labor therein be not ultimately crowned with success.

It is wonderful what a taste a man may acquire for a disagreeable study or pursuit by an earnest determination to love it. There is hardly any pursuit so forbidding, hardly any work so tough or crabbed, that a man who sincerely tries to extract from it the utmost happiness may not twine about it the roses of fancy and hide most of its thorns. Our acquired tastes — tastes for things at first repulsive, as coffee, tobacco, etc. — are generally the strongest. Explorers in the Arctic regions, who have been accustomed to lie on the frozen snow or bare rock, find it almost impossible, on their return to civilized life, to sleep in a bed. When Captain Ross and his party were taken on board the *Isabella*, after their polar wanderings, they found even the accommodations of a whaler too luxurious for them. As it is with the body so with the mind; its —

“nature is subdued,
Like the dyer’s hand, to what it works in.”

It is a well-known fact that at the bar the men who have risen to the highest eminence conceived at the beginning only disgust at the study. The first Lord Redesdale of England has left it on record that he had never met with a successful man at the bar who had taken to the law because he felt for it a natural aptitude. Every one of his successful contemporaries had gone to the bar to earn a livelihood, and in so doing had acquired a taste for and a mastery of his profession. The truth is, all appreciation depends on knowledge; and a close and more intimate acquaintance with subjects which to the eye of ignorance present a repulsive aspect, reveals unexpected attractions to the mind.

One of the most unfortunate things which can

happen to a young man of mediocre talents, who finds himself in a humble but useful calling in which he may win a good living, is to fancy that he has "a soul beyond the shop," and to chafe and fret because he is not in some more honorable pursuit. Who has not met, at some time in his life, with such misguided youths — misguided by a false sense of their own capacity and of the dignity of work ; youthful Phaëthons, who would drive the fiery coursers of the Sun ; who aspire to soar aloft, when Nature has decreed that they shall only creep or walk ? Some years ago, in Paris, a young man named Arsène hanged himself at his master's house because a cruel world had doomed him to be a grocer. He left a memorandum bewailing his hard lot, and beseeching his parents to erect a simple tombstone to his memory with these words inscribed thereon : "Born to be a man ; died a grocer." Never was there a more palpable self-delusion. The plain truth is, as another has said, that he was not born to be a man ; if he had been, he would have lived a grocer. He would have quietly and conscientiously discharged the duties of his humble calling, till, by his zeal and faithfulness, he had demonstrated his fitness for something higher.

The way for a young man to escape from an uncongenial position is not by despising its duties and whining about its meanness, but by throwing himself into it so lustily that men will see that he has mental and moral qualities fitting him for a higher calling. The world is always groping about for men to fill important positions, and in general it is as hard to find men qualified for them as it is for persons to find places.

Finally, whatever your calling, do not be content with a mediocre degree of skill in it. Remember that

such talent, ability, or skill, if it be only of average quality, is of little market value. Only when it rises above the average has it a decided value, and its worth then increases in a geometrical rather than in an arithmetical progression. You may have been told how it is with the precious stones — with diamonds, emeralds, or pearls — that the relative values of large and small ones are out of all proportion to the size. Every increase in size adds to the value in far greater ratio, until, as in the case of the largest and most famous gems, they become of almost priceless worth. So, as a late writer observes, it is with talent and skill. A man may have a talent for music, and may have devoted to it considerable time and attention. Up to a certain point the culture of it will only afford recreation to himself and pleasure to his friends, and at the same time be of very little market value, even though a not very wide gulf divides him from professional players receiving fabulous sums for their services. Set your mark, then, high. Twenty or thirty per cent. more toil may win for you a hundred per cent. more remuneration. Do not hearken for a moment to the suggestions of the sirens Ease and Pleasure. Why is that gray-headed man yonder a bookkeeper at a thousand or fifteen hundred a year, instead of making a fortune like his schoolfellow, a leading lawyer or accomplished engineer? Because in an evil hour he found his present employment set before him, — nothing to do but to add up columns and strike balances or make out bills, no exertion of thought, no risk of failure, but a secure income; and he yielded to the temptation, the result of which is the pursuit of a monotonous, ill-paid calling in which there is no chance to rise.

It is not because he works so much harder than this

man, or even than a weaver, that a great lawyer, engineer, or railway superintendent is paid so much more for a day's work. It is the peculiarity of work of every kind, as we have already said, that a small addition to the expertness makes a large addition to the remuneration, and that the higher the grade of work, the more glaring is the difference. Daniel Webster said to a young lawyer who complained that the profession was over-crowded, "Young man, there is always room enough at the top." At the point of skill at which only three or four men have reached, out of so many hundreds, there will be little competition and high pay. When there are services which only one man — a Webster or an Edison — can perform, he can name his own price.

CHAPTER IV

HEALTH, BODILY AND MENTAL

"Let joy, temperance, and repose
Slam the door on the doctor's nose."

LONGFELLOW.

"Health cut off means life reduced in attractiveness and reality by five sixths." — AMIEL.

NEEDS any one to be told that a fundamental condition of worldly success is *a sound bodily constitution*? In making a voyage, the first necessity is to have a ship that will float and hold together, in spite of storms and tempests. No matter how ably it be manned, or how skillfully it be navigated, if it be not stout enough to resist the fury of the waves, it will be in danger of foundering on its way. So, in the voyage of life, talents, knowledge, skill, and energy are all needed, but of what use are they, so far as any great achievement is concerned, if neutralized by a weak body? Depend upon it, the mind cannot act with vigor, most certainly not with vivacity — cannot endure the strain of severe and protracted toil necessitated by modern competition — when the body is feeble and sickly. In mercantile callings competition is now so intense, and business is transacted on so colossal a scale, that the drain on a man's vitality is greater and more exhausting than ever before in the world's history. In the learned professions especially, great constitutional strength and power of endurance are absolutely indispensable to success. The high prizes are

not to be won without exhausting toil, and this cannot be endured without fine bodily stamina. In the great law case of *Gibbons vs. Ogden*, Daniel Webster, being called upon suddenly and unexpectedly to make his argument in the United States Supreme Court, spent the whole night following in preparing his brief. At nine o'clock the next morning, after eleven hours of continuous intellectual effort, and a breakfast of only tea and crackers, he went into court, and made one of the most powerful arguments of his life.

The demand on the vitality of a successful clergyman, lawyer, doctor, statesman, or engineer is continuous and exhausting. Talents alone, however fine, will not ensure success. The mind may be keen as Saladin's scimiter; it may be carefully cultured, and full of knowledge and resources; but to achieve great and lasting results it must be capable of long stretches of sustained energy, of intense and protracted labor, so as to be fresh, elastic, and alert after many hours, and even days and nights of effort, whether at the desk, in the court-room, in the senate, or in the chamber of disease. But sustained energy cannot be maintained without powerful digestive organs. Bodily vigor is imperatively needed where long-continued effort is to be made. The axe of the intellect may be sharp-edged, and may be driven home at times with Herculean force; but equally needful is the power of dealing reiterated and cumulative blows. In war it is the one march more that wins the campaign, the five minutes' more persistent courage that wins the fight. Why at Lutzen did the Swedes win the long-disputed field? Because their third desperate onset, maddened as they were by the death of their chief, was too much even for troops that had maintained

successfully, as had Wallenstein's, a hard day's fight. It is a double advantage of sturdy bodily health that with it you can not only work more hours in the day, but also throw into your work a greater amount of mental force.

What sensible carpenter thinks of going to work without seeing that his tools are in good condition? What musician neglects to examine his instrument from time to time, and see that it is in tune? Yet this wondrous body of ours, which is our box of tools, our organ with a thousand pipes, how shamefully do we neglect! Nay, how often men do worse, exhaust and ruin it by sensual gratification! See William Pitt piloting the British ship of state for a quarter of a century through the storms of the French Revolution, and dying at forty-nine of anxiety, overwork, opium, and port wine! See Coleridge and De Quincey stranded on a poppy-covered coast, the land of the "Lotos-eaters," where it is never morning, nor midnight, nor full day, but always afternoon! See Richard Brinsley Sheridan, with his brilliant and versatile talents, going to pieces on the breakers of intemperance and overwork! Sergeant S. Prentiss tried the double task of exhausting labor and sensual gratification; and if ever a man was justified in so doing, he was, with his leonine health and matchless mental gifts. But though he could for many years sit up all night gambling and drinking, and next day go into court and surpass in argument and eloquence lawyers who had studied their cases half the night and slept the rest, he became physically bankrupt at forty-two years of age, having burned to the socket, in that time, the lamp of life that had been trimmed to last fourscore.

Take care, then, of your body; but remember that good health, and consequently nervous energy, does not imply great muscular strength. No test here is more deceptive than that of the tape-line or the health-lift. Health is a *universal* good condition, — a state of the body in which every faculty does its work well, without ever being conscious of it. It is vitality, nervous force — that mysterious, inexplicable power which is nourished by exercise and the assimilation of food and air — which is the measure of a man's success. It was this which in our civil war enabled the pale, delicate-looking soldier bred in the city, to out-travel and out-fight the giants of the backwoods and prairies. Many a lawyer and preacher, whose thin and ghostly-looking body indicates the frailest of constitutions, is found on trial to possess such a tough, wiry power of endurance as would indicate a constitution of *lignum-vitæ* or iron. Such was the case with Lord Brougham, and with those fiery and masterful advocates, W. M. Evarts and Rufus Choate. Dr. Kane was one of the frailest-looking of men. He never went to sea without suffering from seasickness, and he suffered both from disease of the heart and chronic rheumatism; yet he climbed the Himalayas, ascended the Nile, fought heroically in the Mexican war, and endured triumphantly in the Arctic seas sufferings under which the strongest men, specially trained to endure such hardships, broke down and died. On the other hand, Dr. Winship, the apostle of "muscularity," who at one time could lift 3000 pounds, died at the early age of forty-two.

It is, therefore, a good *working* constitution that you want, not that of an athlete; the capacity of prolonged bodily or mental effort, not the physique of the

gymnast or the stroke-oar, or the brawn of the gladiator. No doubt, physical vigor is needed more in some professions than in others. But in all it is indispensable to leadership, and he who lacks it must not think to command. It is true there have been men who, in spite of ill health, have done great and heroic things. Wolfe, capturing Quebec, in spite of rheumatism and gravel; the gouty Torstenson in a litter, leading armies and astonishing Europe by the rapidity of his movements; Richelieu, signing death-warrants and baffling conspirators with one foot in the grave; Robert Hall, preaching immortal discourses while tortured by an excruciating disease; Scott, dictating romances with cramp in the stomach, which makes him roll about in agony; Henry Bulwer, going down to the House of Commons with a hectic, suffocating cough, to make a speech on the Irish Church, which is inaudible to more than ten or a dozen members who close up to him, — all these are illustrious examples of the soul triumphing over the body's weakness. But even these heroic men would have achieved still greater things if not hindered by wretched health.

On the other hand, see Swift dying in moody mania, "like a poisoned rat in a hole," after nine years of brain disease; see the great Isaac Newton with intellect temporarily shattered by excessive study, or rather study without exercise; Leyden sinking into his grave in his thirty-sixth year, in his insane effort "to surpass Sir William Jones a hundred-fold in learning;" Alexander Nicoll, Hebrew professor at Oxford, who was said to be able to walk to the wall of China without the aid of an interpreter, dying of intense study at the same age; Scott excited to such a pitch of activity that "he could not leave off think-

ing ;” Southey struck down from the height of fame into mere imbecility ; Hugh Miller, Hayden, Romilly, Laman Blanchard, Castlereagh, Admiral Fitzroy, and Provost-Paradol perishing by their own hands !

Thus far we have spoken of health only as a condition of success ; we wish now to speak of it as not merely desirable, but a duty. “The duty of good health !” we hear a reader exclaim. “Can health be had always by seeking for it ? Are not thousands and tens of thousands of men enfeebled by consumption, racked by rheumatism, tortured by neuralgia or gout or other diseases, who have sought for health as for hid treasure for years ; who have spent large sums of money for doctors and drugs, the aid of infirmaries, visits to watering-places and water-cures, but all in vain ?” True ; but are you quite sure, my excited reader, that the diseases of all these invalids were inherited, or if inherited, that they might not have been healed, or at least that their severity might not have been abated, by early and adequate care regarding exposure to the weather, exercise, sleep, bathing, food, etc. ? No doubt we all walk among pitfalls, and our physical constitutions will often be injured, sometimes fatally, under circumstances where no human prescience, care, or caution could prevent it. Nay, owing to one’s ignorance, especially in youth, of the causes of disease, he may be running into the jaws of the enemy at the very moment when he is most confident of escape.

In spite of all this, it is positively certain that there are certain lines of conduct the following of which will greatly lessen the chances of disease, or render it less fatal than otherwise when it occurs, and enable one to recover his health more speedily when lost

than if such conduct be neglected. The vast majority of the causes of ill health — such as excess or deficiency of bodily aliment or of mental excitement, deficiency of pure air or of bodily exercise or warm clothing, lack of personal cleanliness or of cleanliness in our houses, overwork or underrest — are unquestionably, except in the cases of the extremely poor, within our control. Is not good health, then, except in a comparatively few cases, a duty? Is it not the duty of every man to make the most of, and to do the most possible good with, the faculties which God has given him? Is it not self-evident that only a healthful man, with a sound mind in a sound body, can discharge all his duties, public and private, in the most efficient manner? Is not such a man more likely to be a sunny and amiable man, than he who is tortured by headache, asthma, lung disease, gout, chronic indigestion, or any other of the ills that flesh is heir to?

“Every man,” says the scrofulous and hypochondriacal Dr. Johnson, “is a rascal when he is sick.” If not a rascal, he is exceedingly apt to be a cynic, gloomy, morose, and ill-natured. Who does not know that nine tenths of the ill humor, fretfulness, and despondency of men springs from ill health? Who that has read the biography of Carlyle, that Prometheus with a vulture forever at his heart, does not remember with what deep suffering this strong spirit struggled through the long, weary years against his tormentor? How much of the irritability, crabbedness, and censoriousness which he manifested were due, not to a naturally bad temper, but to the pangs of an obstinate malady, by which his whole nature was warped and distorted? It was his own sad experience that suggested and gave poignancy to the advice which he

gave to the students at Edinburgh, that "Health is a thing to be attended to continually; you are to regard that as the very highest of all temporal things for you. There is no kind of achievement you could make in the world that is equal to perfect health. What to it are nuggets or millions?" It was only the consciousness that he had been crippled in his work, and that his eagle-like intellectual vision had been dimmed by disease, that could have wrung from the great Scotchman such words as these.

When will men learn, and act upon the knowledge, that "the whole of a man goes into his work? Poet, orator, philosopher, or man of business, his body follows him, and holds the pen, and shapes the thought, and imparts its quality to all that he says or does." Above all men, a Christian needs to be a healthful being. If he would keep bright his faith in God, if he would grapple with temptation successfully, he must have a constant care for his body as well as for his soul. Constitutional, hereditary, and accidental causes, the action of which he may more or less modify, even when he cannot wholly control, and still more, diseases provoked by his own imprudence, are constantly at work to modify his opinions, feelings, and conduct. Dr. J. M. Mason used to say that the grace which would make the apostle John look like an angel, would be only just enough to keep Peter from knocking a man down. Who does not know, both from personal experience and observation, that an east wind, gloomy skies, too much heat or cold, a sick headache, a catarrh, a *tic douloureux*, an attack of rheumatism, a dull sense of hearing, a dyspeptic or a plethoric habit, are almost sure, at times, to affect the personal piety of him who is thus afflicted? A disor-

dered liver enshrouds the universe in gray, and the gout covers it with an inky pall and makes us regard our best friends as little better than disguised fiends.

The duty of good health is especially binding on kings, statesmen, military leaders, judges, and all other men who, by fortune or their fellow-men, have been raised to offices of authority, responsibility, and trust. Who can adequately estimate the influence of ill health on statesmanship or the administration of justice or the general conduct of affairs? The more absolute a man's authority, the more important it is that every part of his bodily organism be in a sound, natural condition. Well may the Russians, for example, tremble at the ill health of the Czar! When a prime minister of Great Britain displays an unusual degree of irritability, or a chancellor of the exchequer gets into the habit of snubbing deputations and giving snappish answers in the House of Commons, or when a leading American official is crabbed and surly to those who have a right to address him, we may be almost sure that he is suffering from disease in some of its forms. Although the fact of Pitt's illness behind the Speaker's chair, during the speech to which he made his famous reply in 1783, did not impair his eloquence, yet the collapse of the ministry formed by Lord Chatham in 1766 was unquestionably owing to suppressed gout.

When the stomach of Lord Tenterden, the English judge, was out of order,—as, owing to his fondness for turtle, it generally was after a city dinner,—woe to the unlucky junior counsel who cited an inapplicable case, and woe still greater to the prisoner who had the misfortune to appear before him in the criminal court! The irritability or ill nature generated by an

ill-digested dinner has probably lengthened the term of imprisonment to which many a criminal has been doomed.

How much bad theology, how many gloomy views of God and man have been due to chronic indigestion, excess of bile, or a morbid melancholy! When, a few years ago, the president of the British Scientific Association answered objections to his brilliant inaugural address by referring to the different aspects of the ultimate problems of theology in different "moods" of mind, he frankly acknowledged the enormous fluctuations to which even a masterly intellect, specially trained in those sciences which are supposed to purge the mental eyes from the distorting films of prejudice and sentiment, is yet subjected. If "moods," which are dependent on a man's health, thus determine for the hour the entire theology of a philosopher, who can doubt that they still more powerfully influence, for the mass of mankind, a very large share of their faith in all supersensual truths,—even in the distinctions of right and wrong, no less than in the verities of theology? When Henry Martyn, afterwards the celebrated missionary, had won the honor of senior wrangler at the University of Cambridge, England, he was the victim of an ugly and unpleasant suspicion that mathematics were an invention of Satan, and that, like Bunyan's hero, he had been led into a net of destruction. The truth is that philosophers are as absolutely dependent on their physique as day laborers. Readers of the autobiography of John Stuart Mill will remember that, when that extraordinary youth, who had been working at high pressure for twenty years, fell suddenly into the "Slough of Despond," and all life's uses seemed to him "stale,

flat, and unprofitable," it was because during that long period he had been drawing upon the springs of vitality even more deeply than if he had been hedging and ditching, deep-draining, or following the plough. Who can doubt that the cynicism of La Rochefoucauld, that tersest and most polished of maxim-writers, — a man naturally kind and amiable, — was due, in a large measure, to his wretched health, subjecting him to extreme bodily tortures?

Again, the duty of good health is yet more evident when we consider that the healthful man is far more likely to have healthful offspring than the man who neglects or tramples upon the laws of well-being. Good health and ill health perpetuate themselves to future generations, and are thus productive of immeasurable happiness or misery. Good health, moreover, conduces to longevity; and long life is not only personally desirable, but advantageous to the commonwealth. A great deal of the best work of which a man is capable, — all that work which requires large experience, profound learning, or, above all, the mellowing influences of mature years, which ripen and bring to perfection the splendid fruits of toil and culture, — is left undone, if a man is cut off before he has reached his prime. Would Milton have been known as a great epic poet, or would Goethe have been recognized as the prince of German poets, had these men died, like Byron and Burns, at thirty-six and thirty-eight years of age? Was it not in the evening of life, when from fifty to eighty-seven years old, that Handel and Haydn, Poussin, Titian, and Michael Angelo produced their greatest works? Would Louis XIV., in France, or Frederick the Great, in Germany, have been able to set his stamp on his own age, had the

former died at the epoch of the peace of Nimeguen, or the latter at his defeat at Kolin by Daun?

Finally, it should be remembered that in childhood we are consumers, not producers, and therefore a burden to the adult. Where many adults die prematurely, the proportion of helpless and dependent persons in a community is proportionately large, and the production is less in proportion to the consumption. Thus the sound health which is the greatest of earthly blessings to the man whose organism enjoys it, is essential to the well-being of a kingdom or state.

Does any one here ask how a good constitution may be acquired and maintained? We answer that it is generally inherited, not made, yet it may often be acquired, and always preserved, by strict attention to the health of body and mind. Regular open-air exercise, nutritious food slowly eaten, abstinence from narcotics and alcholic stimulants, the daily use of the bath and flesh-brush, well-ventilated and sunny living and sleeping rooms, an abundance of sleep at regular hours, the cultivation of cheerfulness and hopefulness, and habits of regularity are the conditions of that health and bodily energy which will not only enable you to triumph over all the difficulties and perplexities of your calling, but will be of itself a source of positive and perennial joy. To preserve that health and energy, you should learn to bolt your door on all business cares and anxieties after the time for work has ended. There is nothing to be gained, and a great deal to be lost, by brooding over and trying to decide business problems out of shop or office hours. As the bow that is always bent loses its elasticity and spring, so the mind that is kept continually on the stretch loses its resiliency, buoyancy, and force, and becomes pre-

maturely exhausted, aged, and unfit to cope with the tasks and difficulties of life. Nor is this all. By bringing his business home with him, instead of leaving it at his office or shop, a man becomes at last moody and sullen or irritable, and an obstruction to the enjoyment of all about him. No man can keep his mind bright, alert, and vigorous, unless he gives it a variety of occupation and frequent, regular intervals of recreation and of rest. It has been justly said that many people dawdle about their work and waste time and energy talking with friends and loitering about during business hours, and are then obliged to work nights in order to make up lost time. This is "very detrimental to the highest success, and from a business point of view thoroughly demoralizing. The most successful men train their minds to act forcefully and rapidly during certain regular hours, and then drop everything relating to their work until the next day. The result is, they maintain their mental and physical vigor and elasticity, and the greater efficiency brought to bear upon the management of their affairs shows itself in every detail."

CHAPTER V

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF INVALIDS

“Vitality is the measure of success. Physical strength does not imply nervous energy, and nervous energy does not require great physical strength.” — T. T. MUNGER.

WHY is it that Americans rush into extremes in almost everything they undertake? Till a few years ago we neglected physical culture; and now, having discovered our mistake, we fly to the opposite extreme, — less objectionable, no doubt, than that neglect, but still objectionable, — and make hard, exhausting work of our very sports and recreations. The competitive spirit has infected these sports, which are rather tasks than sports, and we strain our muscles to their utmost tension by feats of walking, rowing, or lifting, as if the primary object of all athletic exercise were, not to invigorate the body, but to “beat the record.” This is not relaxation or recreation, — it is overwork, a dangerous exercise of heart and muscles, a profligate expenditure of the vital surplus force, which will produce an inevitable reaction in flaccid tendon and aching limb, and, if long persisted in, heart-disease and even death.

We live in an age and land of brag; and there is a growing disposition to despise any recreation which does not cost a deal of money, or exact and consume a large amount of energy, or which does not win from lookers-on bravos and huzzas. The disciple of the gentle Izaak Walton to-day, instead of enjoying

like him the landscape, the songs of the birds, and the calm repose of country life, engages in a fierce struggle for preëminence, utterly foreign to the spirit of his master and the genius of his art. Base-ball and foot-ball players go into the field, not for amusement, but to win silver cups. We believe, as the previous chapter shows, in the absolute necessity of physical vigor to the highest success and happiness; but because physical vigor is a good thing, does it follow that one must have the digestion of an ostrich, the strength of an ox, or the lungs of a race-horse? Can no one have a sound mind in a sound body unless he can lift a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds, or swing a pair of one hundred pound dumb-bells? Is it true that, as Emerson asserts, power is a "constitutional trait"? that "for a performance of great mark one needs bodily health"? Have the lessons of history and biography nothing but discouragement for men with frail or diseased bodies? Do they not, on the contrary, proclaim, in trumpet tones, on thousands of pages, that mental force is the first requisite to worldly success; that the soul may triumph over all the frailties of the body; and that the *vivida vis animi* in a feeble frame may win victories of which the feeble mind in a titanic body can only despair?

We say, therefore, to the invalid, Invaluable as health is, do not despair; do not rust in idleness because you lack it. There may be work for you, in spite of your hindrances. If you can work without aggravating your disorder, you will be happier than in idleness. Great and heroic, certainly, were the deeds of Paul the Apostle, "in bodily presence weak;" of Athanasius, a giant soul in a pigmy body, who fought single-handed for half a century the great

battle of Orthodoxy, having, as Hooker said, "no friend but God and death;" of Gregory VII., the mightiest yet most diminutive of all the popes of Rome; of Pascal, a confirmed invalid at eighteen; of the half-deaf and half-blind Johnson, bravely carrying through life the weight of a diseased and tortured body; of Channing, with his frail clayey tabernacle; of Green, writing his book on "The making of England" when so exhausted by disease that they who saw him from day to day could hardly believe that he would live through the coming winter. None of these men swung on parallel bars, or ran a foot race, or stood on a health-lift; nor did the spiritual giant by whose sanctity the great dialectician of his time, Abelard, was cowed and silenced. Bernard of Clairvaux was physically so frail that his speech seemed almost like that of one disembodied, and after any great effort it seemed as if he must die the very next hour. He often for days was unable to take any food, and hardly ever took it except under the sense of necessity, to prevent the spark of life from going out; yet this infirm monk ruled Europe from his cell. He uttered "words which, in great emergencies, were the pivots of history." He struck as with sabre cuts the pontifical pride, elected popes, and guided and governed the counsels of Europe.

Where in the whole range of pulpit oratory would it be possible to find a series of more powerful and impressive discourses than those of Robert Hall? Yet some of the greatest of these discourses, such as that on "Modern Infidelity," were preached in the intervals of those frightful sufferings which shook his nervous system to its centre. Dr. Pritchard, the eminent physician who, after Hall's death, conducted

the surgical examination of his body, says that the kidney on the right side was entirely filled by a large, rough, pointed calculus. He points out many other sources of pain, especially in the vertebræ, — thus explaining that constant pressure of the hand on the back which was noted when Hall was preaching, — and concludes that “probably no man ever went through more suffering than did Mr. Hall.” Yet, after tossing and writhing on the rug before the fire, — the only place where he could get comparative ease, — he would stand up, livid with exhaustion and with the sweat of anguish on his brow, to proclaim, without a murmur, from his pulpit the message of God to a lost world. “I suffered much,” the noble man would say after these paroxysms, “but I did not cry out, did I? — I did not cry out.”

Among all the intellectual laborers of modern times where can be found a mightier toiler than that giant of theology, Richard Baxter? Besides all his labors as a pastor, he proposed to himself, and executed, the task of exploring the whole circle of the moral sciences, logic, ethics, divinity, politics, and metaphysics. He also executed a mass of other works, including an Ecclesiastical History in two large volumes, the authorities enumerated in which, and from a diligent study of which the work is drawn, would form, it is said, a considerable library. The results of his gigantic labors are contained in one hundred and sixty-eight ponderous volumes, and a vast mass of unpublished manuscripts, in writing which “he has called to his aid,” says Sir James Stephen, “an extent of theological and scholastic lore sufficient to equip a whole college of divines.” Yet all these Herculean labors were performed — by whom? By a man with vigorous

health, with nerves of steel and a frame of iron? No, — by one who all his life suffered from chronic disease, and, during a large part of it, from penury and persecution. It was “amidst daily pains of sciatica and many worse,” in loathsome jails or precarious hiding-places that, from the forty-seventh to the seventy-sixth year of his life, Baxter achieved in almost ceaseless pain works without a parallel in the history of English theological literature, alike for their extent and their prodigality of intellectual wealth.

James Watt, the great Scotch engineer and mechanic, who did so much for mankind by the invention of the steam-engine, was of an exceedingly fragile constitution, and was all his life subject to violent headaches, which were the bane of his existence, and confined him to his room for weeks together. He was sometimes so overcome by them, that he would sit by the fireside for hours, with his head supported by his elbow, and scarcely able to utter a word. Yet he was a prodigious worker, and his attainments, not only in mechanics, but in many other departments of knowledge, astonished all who knew him. “His stores of miscellaneous knowledge,” says Lord Jeffrey, “were immense, and yet less astonishing than the command he had, at all times, over them. It seemed as if every subject that was casually started in conversation was that which had he been last occupied in studying and exhausting.” The same great critic adds that Watt was not only minutely and extensively skilled in chemistry and the arts, and in all the branches of physical science, but curiously learned in metaphysics, medicine, and etymology, and at home in all the details of architecture, music, and law. He was well acquainted, too, with most of the modern languages, and familiar

with most of their recent literature. He would spend hours in detailing and expounding the theories of the German logicians, or in criticising the measures and matters of the German poetry.

Were the deeds of William Pitt, or those of William of Orange, king of England, "performances of great mark"? Both these men were invalids. The last named, frail and sickly from childhood, had in manhood a constant cough, and was often tortured by severe headache. Exertion soon fatigued him. Yet, though his life was one long disease, he not only ruled England successfully, but led the British troops to victory in the field. Who has forgotten the daring voyages, explorations, and discoveries of Dr. Kane? Small in body, with frail health, he never went to sea without suffering from sea-sickness, and he suffered, also, from heart-disease and chronic rheumatism; yet this *homme d'une Hercul enne faiblesse* climbed the Himalaya, ascended the Nile to a great distance, traversed Greece on foot, visited Dahomey, descended the crater of Teal in the Philippines, fought like a hero in the Mexican War, and triumphed over sufferings in the Arctic Seas, under which the strongest men, specially trained to endure such hardships, sickened and died.

Who gave to the English-speaking peoples that sheet anchor of their liberties, the Habeas Corpus act? Was it not the born cripple — who could not move without his servant and his crutch; who suffered daily from epileptic fits, and was never without "a dull, aching pain in his side" — Shaftesbury? In spite of his physical infirmities, he was an animated companion, and a busy and energetic politician. He was the counselor of Cromwell and the chancellor of Charles

II., who declared that he knew more law than all his judges, and more divinity than all his bishops. To whom do we owe "The Origin of Species by Natural Selection," the most remarkable work of the age? To a man rioting in health? On the contrary, Darwin suffered from continual ill-health; and yet he tells us, in contradiction to the prevailing ideas: "If I had not been so great an invalid, I should not have done nearly so much." Never able to work long at any time, he made his mark on his generation by concentrating his energies on one single task, and toiling steadily on in spite of bodily feebleness. Some eighteen years ago the accomplished author, John Addington Symonds, who died recently in Rome, went to Davos, Switzerland, broken down in health, and doomed by his doctor to death, if he should remain there. He nevertheless did remain, and afterward worked incessantly at literature and published some twenty-five scholarly volumes, besides writing a great deal of miscellaneous matter, and reading and inwardly digesting scores of heavy Italian and German books on history, biography, and criticism, also many volumes of Greek poets, and a library of French and English authors, — all slowly perused in railway stations, trains, steamers, wayside inns, and Alpine chalets.

Similar to that of Mr. Symonds was the energy of Robert Louis Stevenson, which made him, in spite of his chronic invalidism, one of the most prolific writers of his day. Exiled and invalided, these two brave men, "instead of chanting dirges to impossible hopes and unrealizable ideals, went quietly and courageously to their tasks — plucking fame out of the hand of death, and showing that life is measured, not by

years, but by achievements." To the examples of these heroic souls, patiently toiling under the shadow of death, may be added that of our countryman, Andrew D. Mellick, Jr., who dictated "The Story of an Old Farm" at a time when he was the victim of severe physical suffering. For twelve years, we are told, he had been a confirmed invalid, during which time he was unable to walk or use his hands. Through these years of suffering, the knowledge that medical skill could do nothing toward recovery, instead of causing hopelessness and dismay, only aroused his mind to its fullest capabilities. His favorite period of history was that which embraced Colonial and Revolutionary times, and the result was finally the production of his "Story of an Old Farm," a volume which received unwonted and deserved praise from such journals as the London "Saturday Review" and "Athenæum," and the New York "Evening Post," and "Tribune." During the entire time the writing of this book was under way no visits could be made to localities, libraries, the rooms of historical societies, or to individuals. Information not obtained from books was only to be had by extensive and prolonged correspondence, necessitating the dictating of over two thousand letters.

In literature, so far is health from being indispensable to success, that in many of the finest writers there seems to be a necessary connection of genius with disease. As the maple tree must be wounded with the axe before it will yield its honeyed treasures, as the nightingale is said to sing the more sweetly with the thorn in its breast, — so the most exquisite songs of poets have been prompted, oftentimes, by the acuteness of their physical sufferings. If Pope had not

been a hunchback and an invalid, would he have written his exquisite sofa-and-lap-dog poetry? If not irritated by disease as well as by the stings of his enemies, would he have given to the world that greatest of modern satires, the "Dunciad"? Had he been able to leap a five-barred gate, instead of having to be sewed up in stiff canvas stays in order to stand erect, and to wear three pairs of stockings to plump out his spectral legs, he might have written the "Essay on Man," but would he have delighted us with that masterpiece of mock-heroic poetry, that delicious little dwarf epic, "all sparkling with the flash of diamonds and roguish glances, all a-flutter with hoop-petticoats, brocades, and powdered wigs, 'The Rape of the Lock'?"

Had the scrofulous and gloomy Johnson been blessed with bodily health, should we be enjoying to-day that magnificent strain of melancholy music, "The Vanity of Human Wishes"? Was it not the wretched health of Cowper, which, dooming him to semi-monastic seclusion, made him, as a poet, —

" King of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness " ?

The poet Lowell observes that all the drowsy juices of Circe's garden could not hinder De Quincey from writing his twenty-five volumes. It was amidst ceaseless pain and ill health that the giant labors of Calvin were performed. The greatest English historian, Gibbon, was a sickly youth and the most sedentary of men; he hated bodily exercise, and rarely took any; yet he lived to do the work of a giant, — to give to the world the immortal "Decline and Fall," which bridged the gulf between ancient and modern history, and which, in its century and more of life, has seen so

many other histories, temporarily famous, sink into oblivion.

In the learned professions, it would be easy, had we room, to cite the names of scores of men who have fought their way to wealth and eminence in spite of physical infirmity or disease. A striking instance was Dr. Richard F. Littledale, who died recently in London, at the age of sixty. Though the victim during the last twenty-five years of an obscure spinal disease, that kept him in constant pain, he wrote commentaries on the Psalms and the Song of Songs, some powerful controversial works, such as "The Petrine Claims," etc., and a multitude of liturgical and ritual pamphlets and essays; contributed regularly to the weekly Academy reviews of novels and light literature, while he was at the same time actively engaged in clerical work and lecturing. Think of the labors of the late Thomas Spencer Baynes, editor of the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*! He was all his life an invalid. He had a weak heart, and only half a lung; his life long hung by a thread; he knew that he might die at any moment; but so intrepid, so indomitable was he, that he never lost his habitual cheerfulness, but looked at the dread shadow that haunted him with an eye that kept a pleasant, even a humorous, twinkle to the last. How well, with his catholic taste in letters and his subtle critical faculty, he performed his arduous tasks is known to thousands in both hemispheres.

What an amount of laborious and exhausting educational work was done by Horace Mann! He once stated that from the time he accepted the Secretaryship of the Massachusetts Board of Education in June, 1837, until he tendered his resignation of that office in

May, 1848, he labored in the cause on an average not less than fifteen hours a day ! “ From the beginning to the end of this period,” he added, “ I never took a single hour for relaxation.” Yet through all his life he was crippled and hampered by poor health. “ From ignorance of the laws of health, I broke down,” he says, “ at the beginning of my second college year, and have never had a well day since. Whatever labor I have since been able to do, I have done it all on credit instead of capital, — a most ruinous way, either in regard to health or money. For the last twenty-five years, so far as it regards health, I have been put from day to day on my good behavior ; and during the whole of this period, — as an Hibernian would say, — if I had lived as other folks do for a month, I should have died in a fortnight.”

The late Cecil Rhodes, of South Africa, was weak and sickly, yet he went to work with a face of flint and an iron resolution. “ It took me,” said he, “ fifteen years to get a mine, but I got it. Though my boat may be slow in the race, I know exactly what I am starting for.”

If there is any calling in which a sound and vigorous body would seem to be indispensable to high success, it is that of military leadership. The tortures of hereditary disease, united with the pangs of fever, wrung from Napoleon, in one of the most critical periods of his career, the exclamation that the first requisite of good generalship is good health. On three memorable occasions, at least, his eagle eye was dimmed by indigestion or physical suffering. It was a terrible headache that probably caused him to hold back the Old Guard at Borodino, when begged by Murat to hurl it on the Russians and complete their

defeat ; it was indigestion, as well as the overwhelming numbers of his enemies and the defection of the Saxons, that caused the terrible disaster on the third day of Leipzig ; and it was bodily decay and an excruciating disease that snatched the victory from him at Waterloo, in spite of an admirably planned campaign, not the mythical treachery or fancied lack of judgment of the maligned but loyal Grouchy. Yet, on the other hand, was not Rome's greatest captain, " the foremost man of all the world," that *monstrum horribile celeritatis et vigilantiae*, as Cicero, in a letter to Atticus, calls him, Julius Cæsar, who seldom came to a place but his coming preceded the report of it,— was not he a man of slender frame and delicate constitution, and a victim of violent headaches and epilepsy ? Was it not a man half blind from his youth, and wholly blind in his later years, who, early in the fifteenth century, proved himself the first of engineers ; who helped to defeat the Turks in Hungary and the French at Agincourt ; who won fifteen pitched battles and over a hundred engagements ; who achieved the most brilliant of his victories when he could see nothing whatever, compelling the Emperor Sigismund to sue for peace ; and who made the name of the Hussite Ziska a terror to his enemies throughout central Europe ?

Was it not the blind Dandolo, Doge of Venice, who, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, though bearing the weight of one hundred years, stormed Constantinople, himself the first to leap from galley to shore, displaying the standard of Saint Mark, and winning a signal triumph for the Crusaders ? Again, in the Thirty Years' War, who was it that, as a commander, astonished Europe by the rapidity of his movements, — who more than even Bajazet, the Turk-

ish commander, deserved the name of Iberim, or "The Lightning," and of whom it was said that he saw with the eyes of Argus, and fought with the hands of Briareus? Was it not Torstenson, a sufferer from gout, who had to be carried about, even on the battlefield, in a litter? Gibbon, in the "Decline and Fall," records similar triumphs of a gouty Turkish commander, who won on his litter, in spite of his disease, a series of brilliant victories over the veteran legions of Rome. But to descend to later times, — was not the one-eyed hero of Aboukir and Trafalgar little, lame, and sickly? Was not the conqueror of Quebec all his life the victim of a fatal disease, and his constitution ruined, at the very time when he scaled the Heights of Abraham, defeated Montcalm, and made the name of Wolfe memorable to all ages?

Let no one, therefore, who lacks bodily stamina be led by the ceaseless glorification of it in our day to despair of usefulness. Often when nature has been niggard to a man of physical vigor, — when she has given him a weak or diseased frame, which by no possible regimen can be made rugged or healthy, — she has compensated him by a proportional excess of mental power. By concentrating his labors on some single worthy object, and putting into it every ounce of his force and every hour of his time, as Darwin did, — by economizing and making the most of the "golden dust of time," the precious moments, so valueless singly, so inestimable in the aggregate, which most men sweep out into the waste of existence, — the invalid may often achieve far greater results than many a robust man, who, confiding in his ability to work, and to work with energy, at all times, lets hours and days and weeks run to waste.

CHAPTER VI

UNITY OF AIM

"The one prudence in life is concentration, the one evil is dissipation." — EMERSON.

"Many a man misses of being a great man by splitting into two middling ones."

WHAT is the one vital, all-important secret of success, more imperative than any other, however valuable that may be? We believe that it is contained in Goethe's motto, "*Wo du bist, sei alles*" (Whatever thou art, be all there). Elect your work. As Emerson says, "Take what your brains can, and drop all the rest. Only so can that amount of vital force accumulate, which can make the step from knowing to doing . . . a step out of a chalk circle of imbecility into fruitfulness." Next to persuading one to be a Christian, the greatest service that could be done by a New Year's sermon to man or woman would be to inspire deep down in the heart an undying longing, a resolute determination, to achieve perfection in some one thing, some one department of action or of thought.

It is said that the great philosopher of antiquity, Aristotle, who dominated the world's thought for two thousand years, once said that he owed his vast acquirements more to his having a command over his mind — to his ability to hold it steadily to a given object — than to any natural superiority of intellect.

Newton, likewise, attributed his great discoveries to "patient, concentrated thought." If there is anything certain regarding human achievement, it is that steady and undivided attention is essential to the accomplishment of all great undertakings. True as this is of giant minds, it is still truer of average or dwarfish intellects. To these concentration is vital. On all sides they are beset, especially in this busiest of the ages, by work clamoring for hands to do it, by this scheme and that of money-making or of winning a name, to turn aside to which from their chosen calling is the sure way of failure. Resolutely to determine to be a whole man at some one thing—to steel one's mind and heart against all things else, however dazzling, and stick to the object one has deliberately chosen—is the only sure way of success.

"There is a limit," says Gladstone, "to the work that can be got out of a human body or a human brain. He is a wise man who wastes no energy on pursuits for which he is not fitted; and he is still wiser who, from among the things he can do well, chooses and resolutely follows the best." What is more powerless than the scattered drops of vapor in the sky? Yet, condensed in a steam-engine, they can cut through the solid rock, hurl mountains into the sea, or drive a steamship round the globe. What was the secret of Darwin's achievements as a scientist? How did he, all his life an invalid, contrive to make such a mark on his age? Simply, as we have already said, by having one single aim, and by putting every ounce of his force and every hour of his time into the work he had elected to do. Into that he poured the whole stream of his activity, all the energies of his hand, eye, heart, and brain.

Whence springs the fascination of Macaulay as a writer? Let himself tell. Speaking of certain writers who "can carry on twenty books at a time," like Southey, who could write the "History of Brazil" before breakfast, then the "History of the Peninsular War" till dinner, and an article for the "Quarterly Review" in the evening, Macaulay says that he himself is of a different temper. "I never write to please myself until my subject has driven every other out of my head." Dr. Chalmers, the great preacher of Scotland, understood the value of concentration. Because his sermons were enforcements of a single proposition, round which were grouped all his facts and illustrations, the rigid unity of his discourses was confounded with an absolute sameness of ideas, and they were criticised as "sermons with one idea." But if, in a certain sense, he hurled but one idea at his hearers, it was hurled with a giant's force, and was no pigmy thought, but was like the missiles thrown by Milton's holy angels in their combat with the legions of Satan, when they —

"Main promontories flung, which in the air
Came shadowing, and oppress'd whole legions armed."

"Be a whole man at everything!" was the advice which a wise Englishman gave to his son at school. We live in an age of concentration, of specialization, when a man who would succeed must bring all his energies to bear upon one focal point. The most profitable effort is that which is made with a definite object, all observation, reading, and reflection being directed, for the time being, upon it, and upon it alone. How did Bulwer, for as he was said to be, and for as he really was in dress alone, contrive to

write his hundred volumes in forty years, and win renown in so many walks of literature, — as novelist, dramatist, poet, historian, essayist, orator, and politician? Disdainful of ease and determined to excel, he read indefatigably the books needed to feed and stimulate his intellect; abjured the pleasures of hunting, fishing, frequenting clubs, operas, and Almack's; denied himself the delights of travel and sightseeing, morning calls, and parliamentary small talk, in "the season," and buckled down, day after day, to hard work. The result was, that, although his first volume of poems was a failure, and his first novel fell dead from the press, he retrieved his ill luck within a year by his brilliant "Pelham," and the remaining years of his life were a succession of triumphs. Yet, as a rule, he tells us, he devoted to study not more than three hours a day; "but, then, during those hours I have given my whole attention to what I was about."

What was the secret of Sir Robert Peel's success? He was a prodigious worker, and whatever he undertook he did thoroughly. In preparing to speak in the House of Commons, he was elaborate almost to excess. In like manner that giant worker, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, attributed his own success in life to the practice of being always "a whole man to one thing at a time." Lord Saint Leonards, one of the profoundest English lawyers of this century, when asked the mode in which he had pursued his legal studies, thus explained the secret of his success: "I resolved, when beginning to read law, to make everything I acquired perfectly my own, and never to go to a second thing until I had accomplished the first. Many of my acquaintances read as much in a day as I read in a

week ; but at the end of twelve months my knowledge was as fresh as on the day it was acquired, while theirs had glided away from recollection." Golden words, which every young person should imbed in his memory and deeply ponder ! It is only by long and exclusive attention to our acquired knowledge — by brooding over it as a hen over her eggs — that we can make it permanently our own. One of the most dangerous gifts is versatility. The man who is everything is nothing. He is rather a bundle of little likings than a unit, a compact and energetic individual. The woman who can talk pretty well, sing pretty well, write pretty well, paint a passable plaque, interpret in a kind of conventional fashion a sonata of Beethoven, will never do anything in a masterly way. To be felt in this busy world — to strike the world with lasting force — you must be a man of one thing. Having found out what you can do best, do it with all your might. "This one thing I do," is not merely an apostolic resolution, — it is the injunction of universal experience. Singleness of aim must be added to energy, persistence, and patience, or these qualities will fail of their purpose. Many-sidedness is desirable, in itself ; but a blade which is designed both to shave and carve, will neither shave so well as a razor, nor carve so well as a carving knife. The German scholar who died regretting that he had not confined his labors to the dative case, was one-sided, but he understood the secret of mastery. Compression and concentration are indispensable elements in obtaining the best results of effort. The stream which moves with swiftness and energy when shouldered between opposite cliffs, becomes an unsightly swamp when left to spread itself over a wide and level plain. Many

men of fine abilities fail through their violation of this rule. Instead of bending all their faculties toward one point, they split themselves in opposite directions, just as a salamander cut in two runs forward with its front, and backward with its hind part. In every calling this is disastrous, but emphatically in the learned professions. The lawyer, doctor, and preacher need to steel their hearts against every temptation to scatter their energies. The law is a jealous mistress, impatient of a divided allegiance. It is true that Talfourd was both a successful barrister and a successful author; but "such a phenomenon recalls the black swan, or rather the aloe, that blossoms once in a hundred years."

It is the fashion of the day to cry up "breadth," to sound the praises of the many-sided man. Breadth of mind is a good thing, provided it does not hinder, as it is too apt to do, unity of aim, concentration of thought and action. But all history shows that the highest success in any calling is reserved for minds peculiarly adapted to that calling,—minds of one faculty, where no rival powers divide its empire, and variety of pursuits, therefore, does not distract or perplex its energies. Whatever the superiority exhibited by the Pentathletes of ancient Greece in their main exercises, they were almost invariably overmatched at any one of them by men who were accustomed to do that exercise only.

"The one prudence in life," says Emerson, and he never said a wiser thing, "is concentration; the one evil is dissipation. . . . Everything is good which takes away one plaything and delusion more, and drives us home to add one stroke of faithful work." To make ourselves felt in this swiftly-flying life of ours,

to strike the world with lasting force, one must be a man of one thing; find out what he can do well, and then do it with all his might. "No man," said our Saviour, "can serve two masters." It is only one great purpose, chosen early, and clung to obstinately amid all discouragements and hindrances, that can make life fruitful, that can unify all our powers, and by binding them like so many cords into one cable, make them irresistible. The celebrated composer of music, Mendelssohn, in speaking of the necessity of self-reliance in an artist, insists that every man in whom there is an energetic idiosyncrasy obtains a public, provided he only holds out. Many a man, however, he adds, "is ruined from not continuing as he begun, and when he sees himself left for a short time without exciting any remarkable degree of interest, he abandons his nature and endeavors to accommodate himself to such as are accounted the heroes of the day. Such men become renegades and converts, and turn back exhausted when perhaps near the victory they would have achieved had they continued to fight on manfully."

What weighty words and how fraught with truth are these! How full the world is of persons in every calling who almost succeed, — who lose heart and abandon the race just as they are nearing the goal! How many thousands of men have failed in their careers simply because they have not carried their professional skill, however respectable, to the point of mastery! They labor for a while enthusiastically; but their zeal oozes out just before they become expert. They half know a language or two, a science or two, or an art or two, but can derive from no one of them satisfaction or profit. How many others there are of

changeeful, vacillating tempers who have overcome the most formidable difficulties, the most distasteful parts of several professions, without attaining real success in any one of them, and yet have expended toil enough to insure a positive proficiency had they only concentrated their energies upon one point! It is said that in the patent office at Washington there are hundreds of unfinished inventions, the abortive achievements of men who spent years of weary thought upon them, but who lacked the persistence or the ability to make them practically useful. Some years ago the owners of a famous mine drove a tunnel a mile long into strata supposed to contain gold, but, after spending a hundred thousand dollars and a year and a half of labor upon it, they found no gold. Another company drove the tunnel a yard further, and struck the precious ore. In every pursuit there are men who go within a yard of success and fail.

Among the many causes of failure in life the three most common are, perhaps, lack of thoroughness, lack of persistence, and impatience for results. Too many young men want to fly before they have even learned to crawl. Others know a little of everything, instead of everything about some one thing. The men, on the other hand, who have won great victories in their callings have been thorough men, and men of elastic hope and faith and unconquerable pertinacity. It took Watt thirty years to bring his condensing engine to perfection, and Stephenson toiled for twenty-five years over the improvement of his locomotive before achieving his decisive victory at Rainhill. It is the man who neglects no condition of success, who holds on when others let go, who is hopeful when others despair, that triumphs at last. It is the one neck nearer

that wins the race ; the one pull more of the oars that pushes the boat ahead of all competitors ; the one march more that wins the campaign ; the five minutes more of stubborn courage that wins the fight. Macaulay, speaking of British valor, says, truly, that it is never so sedate and stubborn as toward the close of a doubtful and murderous day.

It is the narrow men — that is, men of single and determined purpose — that are edged men, and therefore cut their way readily through obstacles. The shabby, unsuccessful, blundering people, who make the mob of life, are generally such because they will not concentrate their powers, thoughts, outlay, on one work. The world is full of such vagabonds, who, to use their favorite expression, “ can turn their hand to anything,” but can do nothing well. “ Admirable Crichtons ” may excite our wonder, but if we have a lung or liver complaint we consult a doctor who makes it a specialty. How did Stephen Girard become a millionaire? Money was the one thing he coveted and sought,— money, not to be spent on a palatial home, elegant furniture, dazzling equipages, and liveried servants, but to be used as an Archimedean lever to move the fiscal world. To that end he made it a fixed principle to practice the most rigid economy ; to shut his heart to all the blandishments of life ; to stand for the last farthing, if that farthing was his due ; to bar out every impulse which might, even in petty sums, take money from his purse. The result of this singleness of purpose was that this “ Stoic of the mart, a man without a tear,” accumulated millions when millionaires in this country were few, and left a monument to his financial genius and eccentricity in the Girard College for Orphans.

Macdonough, the hero of Champlain, won his victories by pointing his guns at the "big ship" of the enemy. Rufus Choate understood the need and power of concentration when he advised young lawyers to "move heaven and earth to carry the jury." The average man is sure to fail if he dabbles in various pursuits. The business man who has half a dozen kinds of business — who trades, dips into stock speculation, puts a few thousand dollars into mines, a few thousand more into a manufactory, and a few more into a patent invention — is taking, unless he has extraordinary talents for business, the direct road to bankruptcy. It is true that concentration does not imply monotony of action. It is true, also, that it does not imply the rejection of collateral aids. It matters not how many are the tributary streams, if they all flow into the great Amazon River of your action. But every accessory that does not contribute to the one general result is a waste of strength.

Why do so many lawyers fail of high success? Not generally from lack of ability, nor from lack of legal equipment, but because, impatient of slow results, they turn aside from their legitimate pursuit to rent-collecting, the negotiation of loans, speculation in land or stocks, politics, or anything else that will yield a quicker return for their labor. It almost makes one shiver to think that Daniel Webster once came near wrecking his splendid possibilities on this reef. His father, who was poor, and had run in debt for the education of Daniel and his brother Ezekiel, obtained for Daniel, when a law student, an appointment as clerk of the Court of Common Pleas, an office yielding an annual revenue of \$1500 — equal to \$4000, perhaps, to-day. It seemed a large sum to a family

so long pinched by poverty, and Daniel was eager to accept the appointment. "I had felt the *res angustæ domi*," said he, "till my very bones ached." But Mr. Gore, with whom he was reading law in Boston, advised him to decline acceptance of the appointment, and he did so, though with many pangs, and though his father was nearly heart-broken by his decision. Had he accepted the place, he would probably have remained a clerk to the end of his days.

CHAPTER VII

ENERGY

"True wisdom, in general, consists in energetic determination." —
NAPOLÉON.

"A strenuous soul hates a cheap success." — EMERSON.

WHAT mental or moral quality is most essential to success in life? That Herculean worker, Dr. Arnold of Rugby, used to say, as he recalled the careers of his pupils, that the main difference of men in life is not one of talents or equipment, but simply one of energy. In looking at the success of some men who have leaped to the front in life's race, we are too apt to fancy that there was something supernatural, some magic or enchantment, about it. Because we cannot detect its causes, we ascribe it to that mysterious, indefinable quality called *genius*. But this explains nothing. The successful man is no juggler, no practitioner of an occult art. The only magic or witchcraft he uses is a clear apprehension of what he covets and the means of attaining it, and never-ceasing toil. It is not intellectual cleverness, chiefly, that is needed to give a man supremacy in any sphere of activity, but earnestness, vital force, energy of will. It is this, and this only, which enables a man to force his way onward and upward, through irksome drudgery and dry details, amid irritations and vexations, and against wind and tide, in any pursuit or calling in life.

"People do not lack strength," says Victor Hugo ;

“they lack will.” “The world belongs to the energetic,” says Emerson. Talent is desirable ; it is the edge of the axe which makes it penetrate easily ; but whether it penetrates deeply or not depends more on the force applied to it than on the sharpness of the blade. The will is the driving wheel which sets all the mental machinery in motion. It is the man who not only resolves to succeed, but who resolutely re-begins after every rebuff, that reaches the goal. A careful study of history and biography, as well as personal observation, will show that this quality is more indispensable in the struggle of life than many others united. Without it, men of the finest intellectual gifts push themselves but rarely to the front, while, on the other hand, men of moderate abilities, but endowed with great energy, succeed beyond the expectation of all who know them. It is hard to conceive of such a man as Brougham failing in any calling which he had chosen to follow. Lord Wolsey, in a letter of advice to the children of the Woodville (England) national school, says of himself, and no doubt says truly, “Had I begun life as a tinker, my earnest endeavor would have been to have made (*sic*) better pots and pans than my neighbors, and I think I may venture to say without any vanity that, with God’s blessing, I should have been fairly successful.”

Of course, we do not mean to assert that mere energy will of itself suffice. No man can succeed in life who has not a fair amount of common sense, perception of opportunities, and persistence, together with some knowledge of his calling. It is absurd to suppose that one can become a great general without some knowledge of the military art, of strategy and tactics, acquired in the schools or in the field, or that

he can make a fortune in a business of which he is ignorant. Again, we must distinguish between energy and activity. There are hundreds of men who are incessantly active, but who, in spite of their industry, their ceaseless striving, find themselves in old age poor and unknown. The secret of this is, that they have mistaken mere activity for energy. They have been busy enough, but their efforts, having been misdirected, have been simply a waste of activity. A marksman may fire all day at a target, but if he does not take a good aim, his time and powder are wasted. To succeed, one must not only do certain things with earnestness and vigor, but he must do them at the right time and in the right way. Thus much being presupposed, the importance of energy in life can hardly be overrated. A pound of energy with an ounce of talent will achieve greater results than a pound of talent with an ounce of energy. So wonder-working is the last-named quality, that even ill-contrived schemes, if pressed with daring and vigor, sometimes attain a brilliant success, while plans far shrewder and more cunningly contrived, but executed languidly or with moderate spirit, fail altogether. A warm, enthusiastic, blundering man will often do more for himself, and more for others, than a frigid wise man. The world was not made for slow, fastidious, squeamish men, but for those who act instantaneously and with power. Even in the spiritual realm no lofty height was ever attained without energy. "No man," says Cecil, "ever found a happy life by chance, or yawned it into being with a wish. Even the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent only take it by force."

The world is full of men who have no stomach

for work, but an intense craving for the rewards of toil. Day after day and month after month they lie supinely at the base of the frowning hill of success, grumbling at their low estate, and insisting that but for their ill luck or certain unpropitious circumstances they would be at the top, or a long way up the craggy sides. But they will not climb, or will not climb persistently, and life has no rewards for the sluggard, the coward. So fatal is their *vis inertiae*, that if some men of energy were to lay hold of them and bear them up a month's journey, they would inevitably roll to the foot again before a year passed. Do you aspire to signal excellence in your calling? You must buckle yourself to the work before you with all the energies, all the fire, of your soul, — with an ardor that cannot be quenched, a persistence that considers nothing as done while anything yet remains to be done. Let there be no half-devotion, no coquetting, no playing with business as a cat does with a mouse, grasping it at one moment and letting it go at the next. Strain every nerve; tax all your energies; cleave to your object with masterful pertinacity, as if all the world besides were a blank. Never flinch, nor dodge, nor yield to any opposition or hardships you may be called upon to encounter. Do battle with them as the great American river, the Orinoco, does with the sea, — that river which, as Scott sings, —

“in his pride

Hurls on the main no tribute tide,”

but rushes into the sea with such a mighty, impetuous tide of waters as to beat back the currents of the Atlantic for leagues before it, and spread itself far and wide into the ocean.

Energy of will — self-originating force — is so in-

spiring that there is a contagiousness in its example. Brave, intrepid men compel others to follow them. The very atmosphere about them seems charged with the presage of success. Mountains dwindle into molehills before them; difficulties slink away and cower out of sight, like dogs into their kennels. The very rocks and stones in the field seem to be in league with such men to urge on their purpose. Hence the strange, despotic sway that certain bold, bad men have often held over their fellows. Virtue that is intrepid, that is in deadly earnest, is a sure victor over vice; but half-hearted virtue — pusillanimous goodness — is no match for determined evil.

We hear a great deal about “gifted” men, men of genius; but the best kind of genius is the genius for hard work, for high and long-continued exertion, — that great and magnanimous kind which, as Wirt says, pitches from the summit of Chimborazo, above the clouds, and sustains itself in that empyreal region with an energy rather invigorated than weakened by the effort. Indeed, so far is genius from dispensing with labor that it has been defined as a prodigious capacity for hard work. There is a story told of a boy who was anxious to become an artist, and put himself under the instruction of a great painter. The master set him at cleaning some old brushes. The paint on them was dry and hard, and after a few hours the boy concluded that he did not want to be an artist after all. Now the plain truth is that in all professional work, whether artistic or otherwise, there is an appalling amount of brush-cleaning required. Nine tenths of the most useful labor in every calling is drudgery — work which kindles no enthusiasm and elicits no praise, but without which signal success is

impossible. "No man," says the painter Inness, "can do anything in art unless he has intuitions; but between whiles you must work hard in collecting the materials out of which intuitions are made." Count Joseph de Maistre, writing to his daughter about certain so-called "easy methods" of learning foreign languages, says: "They are pure illusions. There are no easy methods of learning difficult things: the only method is, to close your door, give out that you are not at home, and *work*."

One cannot too often or too earnestly repeat to beginners in life that the men who have won for themselves high success or great and enduring reputation, have done so by patient and persistent labor, — by treating time, not as "waste land, fit only for stubble and the goose," but as a true estate, of which no corner is to be left unredeemed. They have made the most of the fragments of time, — laboring as hard, however brilliant and imposing their talents, as the makers of dictionaries and the arrangers of indexes; and the reason why they have surpassed other men is simply that they have worked harder than other men.

Of the vital, preëminent necessity of energy in war, we have abundant proofs. Military history is full of examples to show that energy and nerve, with mediocre skill, will accomplish greater results than the rarest strategical and tactical genius without them. Energy was the distinguishing quality of those "scourges of the human race," Alaric, Attila, Zengis Khan, and Timour the lame, as it was of the Sultan Bajazet, who, from the swiftness of his movements, was called *Ilderim*, or "the Lightning." The career of the fiery one-eyed Carthaginian, by common con-

sent the world's greatest captain, who sprang like a bull-dog at the throat of the Roman power, and who held his grasp almost till it was loosed in death, — Hannibal, — was a continual illustration of the wonder-working effects of energy, when coupled with rare military genius and other qualities requisite in war. His long and successful march of eight hundred miles through Spain and France, all the while fighting his way with a motley army against hostile tribes and nations; his passage of the Pyrenees, the Rhone, and the Alps covered with snow and ice; his rapid and overwhelming defeats of the Roman armies at Trebia, Lake Trasimenus, and Cannæ; his long continuance in Italy without allies and without support from Carthage, are all examples of the most signal vigor and activity, which would be more conspicuous if he had not possessed so many other resplendent qualities.

A glance at the life and varied accomplishments of Julius Cæsar will show that energy was the leading quality of that great captain, though it is less manifest in his character than in that of many others, because of his imperturbable calmness and equanimity. He had no sudden bursts of energy, no alternations of passion and inactivity; the elevation of his character was lofty, but it was not a peak, but a level table-land. The man who took the highest rank in oratory and literary composition as well as in war; who could write, during a difficult passage of the Alps, a philosophical work which was praised by Cicero; whose rapidity of movement in his campaigns was such that he conquered Spain, though defended by a powerful Roman army, in forty days, must have been a man of marvelous energy. Many of his battles were won

simply by his rapidity, which surprised his enemy before he was ready to fight. The energy of Frederic the Great was never surpassed. It was most conspicuous when he was in the most desperate straits, contending against fearful odds. Though fighting only to defend his dominions, he never waited to be attacked. He always assailed the enemy regardless of superior numbers, though four to one, and made up for his numerical inferiority by boldness and hard blows delivered in amazingly rapid succession. Napoleon's colossal energy is well known. Whether in the field, sleeping four hours and on horseback twenty, or in the cabinet, where he toiled terribly and half killed his secretaries, he threw his whole force of brain or hand upon his work. When told that the Alps stood in the way of his armies, "There shall be no Alps!" he replied, and the road across the Simplon was the result.

In politics and statesmanship energy is so necessary that, without it, all other qualities, especially in political crises and times of public danger, are of little value. What would have been the fate of England at the time of the Spanish Armada but for the intense energy, the activity, and resolution of her queen? Vigor is needed by a statesman, not only to carry out his own policy, but to baffle the schemes of his own or his country's enemies. Though particular measures of a vigorous and active statesman may fail, still energetic resolution will uphold him in his place, and win the public admiration even when his schemes are defeated. It was the titanic, unresting energy of Richelieu, backed by resolute courage and an imperious will, that gave him absolute sway over the court and the people of France for eighteen years, though he was opposed by the nobility and the people, and

and the nobles were incessantly plotting his overthrow. He entered the royal council as a master, and even the king himself was overawed by the intensity of his imperious will. By a series of vigorous measures the great minister extended and rounded the French territory, broke the power of the nobles and of the independent officials and judges in the parliament, centralized the administration, strengthened the royal authority, destroyed the independent power of the Huguenots, and restored the balance of power in Europe, which the ascendancy of the House of Austria had disturbed. All this was accomplished amid continual plots and conspiracies against him, which he crushed by his giant energy, seconded by his dexterity and masterly policy.

It was mainly his energy that won for Pitt (Lord Chatham) his dazzling fame as a minister. Many of his political measures were failures, and some which reflected the highest lustre on his administration originated in the brains of other men. But while deficient in many qualities of a great statesman, he overflowed with vigor. He trampled upon the circumlocution and red-tapeism of the day, and infused his own burning energy and enthusiasm into every department of the public service. By the ardor of his soul he set the whole kingdom on fire. He inflamed, as Macaulay observes, every soldier who dragged the cannon up the heights of Quebec, and every sailor who boarded the French ships among the rocks of Brittany. The commanders he employed caught his own impetuous, adventurous, and defying spirit, and, if we may believe the story, the whole, his name, which became a name of terror to the enemies and intriguers of Versailles, would dash to the ground the vauntings of French men.

and women in their most arrogant moods. Among the eminent British statesmen of the last century, Lord Palmerston is credited rather with rare political dexterity than with signal energy. But the prime minister who, after so many enforced resignations, could compel his recall to an office which he held at last for the fifteen years preceding his death at the age of eighty-one, must have possessed great vigor and force. "I know that he can toil terribly," said Cecil, of Raleigh; and the same might have been said of Palmerston. "I have seen him," says his physician, Sir Henry Holland, "under a fit of the gout, which would have sent other men groaning to their couches, continue his work of reading or writing on public business almost without abatement, amid the chaos of papers which covered the floor as well as the tables of his room."

What was the leading quality of Andrew Jackson? Was it not vigor, burning energy, alike on the battlefield and in his contests with "Nullifiers" and the United States Bank? Was it not the same quality that preëminently distinguished Cromwell, Grant, and Bismarck? Why, in the French Revolution, did the Girondists, so superior as philosophers, as patriots, and as men, to the Mountain, succumb to their foes? Because, with fewer scruples, the Mountain had more energy than their foes, — more of the all-conquering "audacity, audacity, always audacity" of Danton; and thus, in spite of their learning, in spite of their virtues and their courage, the Girondists were victims of the guillotine, just as in the civil wars of Rome the best and wisest citizens were vanquished and murdered by men whose highest qualities were some form of energy, too often degenerating into ferocious cruelty.

Need we say that energy is vitally essential in oratory? Did not Demosthenes assert that *kinesis* — that is, “agitation,” “motion,” something of a stirring character — is the chief requisite of the public speaker? A speech may be packed full of thought, tersely and felicitously expressed; its facts may be apt, its style polished, and its logic without a flaw; and yet, if it lack fire and spirit, or if it be delivered tamely, it will make but a feeble impression. On the other hand, a speech which is intellectually far inferior to the other — which is full of lame logic and halting rhetoric — will produce a powerful effect if the orator be energetic, and infuse that energy into his delivery. Energy, force is the very life of oratory, which gives it breath and fire and power. It is the electrical element, that which smites, penetrates, and thrills. Demosthenes, if we may believe the ancient writers on rhetoric, manifested an almost superhuman energy in his speeches. Longinus likens him to a thunderbolt. Of Lord Chatham’s oratory as well as of his political administration the most signal characteristic was the electrical element, the fire, the force. He was not, like Fox, a great debater, — succeeded neither in exposition nor refutation, — but his speeches abounded in fiery declamation, overwhelming invective and sarcasm, and passionate appeals. Scorning the slow, formal methods of the logician, he crushed together statement and proof in the same sentence, and reached his conclusions at a single bound. Such was his force, so imposing his manner, so expressive his look, that he often disconcerted a hostile orator by a single glance of indignation or scorn. Of the oratory of Mirabeau, the master spirit of the French Revolution, force was not only the predominant, but almost the

sole element. His pithy, electric sentences were the watchwords of the Revolution; "his gestures were commands, his motions *coups d'état*." Lord Brougham is another hardly less marked example of the effect of energy in oratory, since he owes his victories almost to it alone. There is a freshness and fire, a rushing force, a declamatory vehemence in his harangues, which reminds one of the roar of the cataract or the dash of the torrent. Almost devoid of personal magnetism; careless in his statements; limping in his logic; manifesting a minimum of literary skill in his long and labyrinthine speeches, which, abounding in exaggeration and stuffed with parentheses and qualifying clauses, are as full of folds as a boa-constrictor; he was yet one of the most potent orators of the century, because of his intense, gladiator-like energy.

In all the learned professions great energy is indispensable to high success. Lord Eldon, when asked how a young man might make his way at the bar, replied, "Let him live like a hermit and work like a horse." William Pinkney, the giant of the Maryland bar, though he posed as an idler and a man of fashion, was one of the intensest of students. Often he rose at the earliest dawn, studied for several hours, and then retired to bed again. On his journeys he read constantly in his carriage, and even studied his law cases there. When Rufus Choate was conducting a great cause in court, it took such possession of him that sleep was an impossibility.

The stories told of the energy of the late Lord St. Leonards, Lord Chancellor of England, — a barber's son, — almost defy belief. Often, after he had been sitting up the best part of the night in the House of Commons, and had returned to his home only as the

day was dawning, he would be up again at six A. M., reading his briefs; then off to Westminster Hall before nine, hold five or six consultations before ten, and be retained, probably, on one side or the other of every case in either court, so that he was on his legs incessantly until four o'clock P. M., when he was again in his seat in the House. It is stated that, on one occasion, the evening before a "motion day," he read and mastered the contents of thirty briefs between his dinner and eleven at night, and then, instead of going to bed, called a hackney coach, and rode to the House of Commons. Nothing short of such enormous energy added to such ceaseless industry could have yielded the princely income he enjoyed, which at one period of his practice as barrister exceeded even \$100,000 a year. The day he retired from the wool-sack was the first real holiday in his professional life; and how was it spent? In making a tour to Switzerland or Italy, or in shooting and fishing in Scotland? No; but in revising and preparing for the press a new edition of one of his numerous and learned law treatises, — his "Law of Vendors and Purchasers." And yet this titanic worker, so far from killing himself, or even damaging his health, by his unremitting toil, lived to the age of ninety-four!

The most successful scholars, authors, teachers, artists, and merchants have been men of indefatigable energy. The reason why they have surpassed other men is because they have taken immeasurably more pains than other men.

Locke carried a note-book in his pocket, to secure the scintillations of every conversation he engaged in. De Maistre and Richter filled piles of commonplace-books with extracts, and with those flashes of thought

or sudden illuminations that must be secured instantly or be lost forever. Instead of trusting to the resources of a single mind, these men ransacked a thousand minds, and enriched their genius with the accumulated wisdom of ages. They felt that only when one contemplates continually the great works of genius, to impregnate his mind with kindred ideas, is he fit to produce anything of the same species.

Emerson, speaking of the energy of every great writer, says: "His force and terror inundate every word; his commas and dashes are all alive." Look at Huet, the famous bishop of Avranches — what a jubilant, tireless energy was his! Languor was never known to his iron nerves. After six or seven hours spent in severe mental toil, he would close his books, singing to himself, and burning for a new encounter. From the age of twenty almost to ninety he prosecuted his studies with a vigor which no labor, however arduous, could subdue. See that titanic worker, Arnold of Rugby, always buried in toil, — mastering some new language, studying some new historical subject, or vindicating his views with the pen, — never exhausted by the drudgery of the schoolroom, but exclaiming at the end of the day, "I feel as if I could dictate to twenty secretaries at once!"

What an intense, energetic worker, despite his frail, sickly, pigmy body, was Alexander Pope! With what tireless care he composed, with what unwearying patience he corrected, his verse! How long he toiled to give a keener edge to some cutting epigram, or to improve the flow of his rhythm! How he turned to use the wakeful hours of the night! In the bitterest freezing nights of winter he would call for a candle, that he might arrest a fugitive thought. Four times in

one winter night in the terrible "Forty" did the shivering housekeeper of Lord Oxford answer the impatient poet's bell for a sheet of paper with which to secure his fleeting thoughts. What indefatigable toilers were Leibnitz, who was never out of his library; Heyne, who, during thirty-three years of the most depressing poverty, studied with such fervor that for six months he allowed himself but two nights' sleep in the week; Cicero and Pascal, who nearly killed themselves by hard study; Walter Scott, who won at his desk the greatest sum ever paid a writer; Harriet Martineau, who during a large portion of her life read or studied till two o'clock in the morning, allowing herself but five and a half hours for sleep, wrote for the London "Daily News" alone 1642 editorials, contributed to magazines 200 articles, and wrote upwards of 52 books! Burke was one of the most laborious of human beings. Milton, who mastered nearly all the knowledge of his time, says of himself, "From the twelfth year of my age I scarcely ever went from my lessons to my bed before midnight." What but the most sustained energy could have toiled through twenty long years to produce that colossal and monumental work, Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"? Carey, the missionary, a poor cobbler in his youth, worked with such energy in India that, when translating the Bible into Oriental languages, he wore out his clerks — three pundits — in one day.

The leading American scholars have been men of unwearying energy. Dr. O. W. Holmes tells us of Horatio B. Hackett, his schoolmate at Phillips Academy, Andover, that "he fastened his eyes upon a book as if it were a will making him heir to a million."

Afterward, when a student in the theological seminary, he manifested the same intense earnestness. "He dug deep that he might pile high." A lover of exactness, he would hunt through lexicons to rectify a syllable. He was so annoyed, says Dr. Edwards A. Park, when he failed to catch the precise meaning of an author he was studying, that he would leave his study-chair, rush from one side of the room to the other, throw himself on the floor, and there toss himself to and fro, laboring and struggling for just the right thought and just the right word. His spirit was like a storm all the day, and when the day was gone, his body was like the sea after it had been agitated by the wind.

In all the departments of art — in musical composition, in vocal and instrumental music, in sculpture and painting — such enormous painstaking is essential to success, that energy in the devotee is vital. Without it, what student can endure the endless iteration of the same exercises — the never-ending training of hand, of ear, of eye — which is requisite to make all the faculties of body and mind subservient to the purposes of his will? The works of Mendelssohn, the composer, testify to an almost unparalleled industry. At home or traveling, at all times and in all places, he was engaged in the conception or development of musical ideas. Leonardo da Vinci would walk the whole length of Milan to alter a single line in his painting of "The Last Supper." Handel was a composer of prodigious force and impetuosity. So volcanic was his energy, that the mechanical power of his hand could not keep pace with the torrent of ideas which flowed from his brain.

Again, energy is essential to success on the stage. The greatest actors have owed their fame to their

unwearied painstaking, and the vigor and spirit which they have thrown into their personations. It was once thought that the elder Kean was an exception, — that his wonderful personations were spontaneous and unstudied. But one who knew him well says that he used to mope about for hours, walking miles and miles, with his hands in his pockets, thinking intensely on his characters. “No one could get a word from him; he studied and slaved beyond any other actor I ever knew.” When studying Maturin’s “Bertram,” he is said to have shut himself up for two days, to study the one line, “Bertram has kissed the child,” the delivery of which produced one of those electric effects of his acting which, from their vividness, were supposed to be merely impulsive. Macready says of Kean’s Richard, that “he hurried you along in his resolute course with a spirit that brooked no delay. In inflexibility of will and sudden grasp of expedients, he suggested the idea of a feudal Napoleon.” Charlotte Cushman tells us at the close of her career as an actress, that, when thrown at an early age by press of circumstances into her profession, she “found life sadly real and intensely earnest,” and resolved to take therefrom her text and her watchword. “To be thoroughly *in earnest*, intensely in earnest in all my thoughts and in all my actions, whether *in* my profession or *out* of it, became my one single idea. And I earnestly believe that herein lies the secret of success in life. I do not believe that any great success in any art can be achieved without it.” Salvini was a titanic worker. He is said to have spent years in mastering a single part.

The most successful merchants and business men have been men of indomitable energy. See the en-

ergy of the great New York merchant, A. T. Stewart! Left an orphan in Ireland at eight, he came to America at twenty years of age, and at twenty-five, with a cash capital of but \$1400, and with no business experience, he boldly started as a trader in dry-goods, in a small frame dwelling twenty-two by thirty feet in size, and toiled at this business from fourteen to sixteen hours a day. For years he was his own bookkeeper, salesman, and porter, and applied himself with such earnestness, force, and singleness of mind to his work that he at once began to make money, and after thirty-seven years of toil built his great retail store on Broadway at a cost of nearly \$2,750,000, and did a business during the last three years of his life amounting, wholesale and retail, to \$203,000,000. One of the most remarkable examples of energy in recent times was Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who succeeded Wilberforce as the anti-slavery leader in the British House of Commons. As a boy, he was dull, heavy, and strongly self-willed, fond only of boating, shooting, riding, and field sports; but, thrown into the society of the Gurney family, he was led to cultivate his mind, and won high honors at the University. The very power of will which had made him so headstrong and difficult to manage as a boy, formed now the backbone of his character, and made him most indefatigable and energetic in whatever he undertook. He threw his whole strength and bulk right down upon his work; every wish and feeling were swept into the vortex; nothing else seemed capable of attracting his interest, nor would he leave his task till it was done and done well, and the giant ("Elephant Buxton" he was called, for he was six feet four in height) became one of the most earnest and influential men of his time.

The word "weary" was not in his vocabulary. "I fancy," he once wrote to a friend, "that I could brew one hour, study mathematics the next, shoot the third, and read poetry the fourth, without allowing any one of these pursuits to interfere with the others." No wonder that this Herculean and tireless worker left it on record as his opinion that the one preëminent difference between men — between the feeble and the powerful, the great and the insignificant — is energy. "That quality," said he, "will do anything that can be done in this world; and no talents, no circumstances, no opportunities, will make a two-legged creature a Man without it." A rival of this Herculean worker was that far-famed Briton, Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde. Work, constant, unceasing work of some kind, was his natural element. "A too easy chair," he said, "is the rack for me." Before dangerous work, especially, he was bright and buoyant. When he was sent to Scinde, he was an old man, sixty years of age. "Oh, for forty!" he exclaimed, "as at Cephalonia, when I laughed at eighteen hours' hard work on foot, under a burning sun." Yet he was not appalled at having, even at threescore, an empire to conquer and consolidate; nor, again, by the prospect of a long and dreary march across a sandy and waterless desert against the stronghold of Emaun Ghur. "It is a hard trial for an old man of sixty," he wrote; "it shakes me to the foundation. Yet what signify these troubles? *I feel a spring in me that defies all difficulties.*" What an example to the languid, the croaking, the despondent! Young men who, in struggling with the difficulties and hardships of their callings, manifest the spirit of this old man may count on victory as sure. The road to success — at

least to high success — is beset with thorns and obstacles ; but, after all, the great dragon to be conquered is indolence. Many men bewail the meanness of their callings, when, with their habits of indolence and waste, their fate would be the same in any calling. They forget that diligence and expertness in humble employments are the surest introduction to greater ones. “The best way for a man to get out of a lowly position,” says Dr. John Hall, “is to be conspicuously effective in it.”

We would say, therefore, to every one who is entering on a career : Be earnest, be bold ; and whatever you do, do it confidently with your whole mind, — do it for the time being as if you were born for no other purpose.

“Be earnest, earnest, earnest ; mad, if thou wilt ;
Do what thou dost as if the stake were heaven,
And it thy last deed ere the judgment day ! ”

Of course, energy, to be effective, must be joined with sound judgment, without which a man is qualified only to be a clerk or foreman for others, who can do the scheming and planning for which he lacks capacity. Woe be to him who gives rein in business to an impetuous will when his judgment cannot be trusted ! It is like putting an engine at high pressure when the fly-wheel lacks sufficient strength ; the centrifugal power will soon scatter it to fragments. See to it, then, that your judgment is cultivated by study of thoughtful books, observation, and meditation. Do not make the mistake which so many youths do, of cultivating the lower faculties of the mind, fancy, wit, etc., instead of the higher, — the auxiliary ones instead of the principal. There is an applause that follows the display of the former which is flatter-

ing to youthful vanity; but let the brilliant, showy youth be pitted in the arena against an antagonist who has aimed chiefly at strength of mind, and sought to discipline his faculties of reasoning and judgment, and he will soon see the sparkling diamond reduced to carbon and pounded to dust.

CHAPTER VIII

LIVE MEN WANTED

“Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man.”
JEREMIAH.

“If you would create something, you must be something.” —
GOETHE.

WALKING one day in a business street of that liveliest of American cities, Chicago, we saw in a shop window this placard: “LIVE MEN WANTED HERE.” It struck us as intensely significant, indicating a want felt not only in that focus of fiery energy, but in every part of our country, and, we might almost add, throughout the civilized world. Everywhere active, energetic, wide-awake men are wanted; men who have the impulse of the age — of the steam-engine — in them, and work at high pressure. The merchant wants live men, who can condense business, talk pithily and persuasively to customers, dash off letters quickly, economize time in their reports to him, and give their whole souls to the work before them. The master-mechanic wants live men to work the saw, turn the auger, and shove the fore-plane. Live men are wanted in the medical profession, to master the latest methods of surgery and cure, to make quick and accurate diagnoses and prescribe promptly in critical cases; they are wanted at the bar, to master the ever-swelling volumes of the law, and to seize and press home to juries the vital points

of testimony; and in the pulpit, — *there* preëminently are live men, men desperately in earnest and with hearts throbbing with energy, wanted in this age of spiritual coldness, skepticism, money-worship, and selfish enjoyment.

“He is a good man, and preaches well,” said a certain deacon of his pastor, “but he needs to be struck by lightning!” Of how many laborious, scholarly preachers, “coldly correct and critically dull,” is this true! Ignorance in the pulpit can be overlooked, mistakes pardoned, and awkwardness excused; but for lukewarmness in an age when the agencies of evil, though subtle, are so deadly in earnest, there is no palliation. Live men are wanted, too, in the pews of our churches. “Have you ever read,” said Mr. Spurgeon one day to his people, “Coleridge’s ‘Ancient Mariner’? I dare say you have thought it one of the strangest imaginations ever put together, especially that part where the old mariner represents the corpses of all the dead men rising up, — all of them dead, yet rising up to manage the ship; dead men pulling the ropes, dead men steering, dead men spreading the sails. But, do you know, I have lived to see that? I have gone into churches, and I have seen a dead man in the pulpit, and a dead man as a deacon, and a dead man holding the plate at the door, and dead men sitting to hear.”

During our late civil war, a brigadier-general, loafing about the streets of Washington, met a newsboy who cried his papers, announcing, “Another great battle.” The general bought a paper, put up his eyeglass to examine it, and in a few moments said to the boy, “I don’t see any battle here.” “No, darn ye,” replied the boy, “you never will, while you hang round this

town." Though there are moral battles raging all around them, there are men who never see them from lack of sympathy and earnestness. Well has Thoreau said that "*to be awake is to be alive*. I have never yet seen a man who was quite alive. How could I have looked him in the face?" Had Thoreau read the biography just published of Charles James Napier, the hero of Scinde, by Sir William F. Butler, we are sure he would have confessed that if he had not seen, he had at least read of, a man who was "quite alive." Napier was, from crown to sole, topful of fiery life. Work, constant and unremitting, was his natural element. Without it he pined and languished, lost his health and spirits; but with it, especially if it had danger in it, he was roused to new life, and bounded, lion-like, to meet the crisis. Almost the only day when he was supremely happy, was that preceding the battle of Meeanee, — the day before that in which, with an almost divine madness, he desperately hurled his handful of men against 40,000 warriors, the pick of the chivalry of Beloochistan. Whatever he engaged in, — gardening, road-making, or fighting, — he threw his whole soul into it.

All the great warriors of the world, Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Frederic, Adolphus, Napoleon, have been emphatically "live men." The last-named, who astonished the world by his intense, persistent, electrical energy, was struck by the lack of it in his fellow-beings. "How few men are there," he once observed, "that, in general, set to work on any given point or topic with more than a corner of their brain." Bajazet was called "The Lightning." Mermeroes, the Persian general who in the sixth century fought the Romans in Colchis, was old and lame; but neither of

these disadvantages diminished his mental or physical activity. Carried in a litter, he by his fiery energy inspired his troops with such confidence, and the enemy with such terror, that he was always victorious. Another live leader was Torstenson, the Swedish general, who bewildered his enemies by his rapidity, and won his victories as much by the legs of his soldiers as by their arms. In political revolutions, it is the "live men," the men fiercely in earnest, who carry the day. In the French Revolution, the Girondists, as we have already said, were every way superior to the Mountain; but the Mountain party had more energy and audacity than their learned, accomplished, and well-meaning but hesitating foes, and won a complete triumph.

All the masterpieces of literature have been produced by "live men." They have been, in most cases, elaborated in the intervals of less congenial toils, — in the pauses of dull drudgery, — amidst neglect, anxiety, and privation. They that have spread light through the world had often scarcely oil for the lamp by which they worked; they that have left imperishable records of their mind, had often little to support the body, and gave forth the incense in which their knowledge is embalmed "in self-consuming flames." They toiled with intense, unresting energy, feeling as did Arnauld when Nicole, on a new work being proposed, said to him: "We are now old; is it not time that we should rest?" "Rest!" exclaimed Arnauld, "have we not all eternity to rest in?" They surpassed other men because they took more pains than other men. They have commonly, as another has said, passed the first half of life in the gross darkness of indigent humility, — overlooked, mistaken,

condemned by other men, thinking while others slept, reading while others rioted, feeling something within them that told them they should not always be kept down among the dregs of the world ; and then, when their time has come, and some little accident has given them their first occasion, they have burst out into the light and glory of public life, rich with the spoils of time, and mighty in all the labors and struggles of the mind.

Even in the present age, when authorship enjoys so many facilities and advantages which it formerly lacked, nearly all the successful writers are prodigious workers. See Dickens shutting himself up and living a hermit's life for six weeks to write a Christmas story, and looking, as he comes out, as haggard as a murderer ! See George Eliot beginning "*Romola*" a young woman, and ending it an old woman ! See the sickly, spectral Green, almost exhausted by literary toil, writing "*The Making of England*" when in such wretched health that those who saw him from day to day could hardly believe that he would live through the coming winter ! "It is not study alone that produces a writer," says Bulwer ; "it is intensity. In the mind, as in yonder chimney, to make the fire burn hot and quick, you must narrow the draught." "Through every clause and part of speech of a right book I meet the eyes of the most determined of men," says Emerson. "His force and terror inundate every word ; the commas and dashes are all alive, so that the writing is athletic and nimble, and can go far and live long. . . . It makes a great difference to the force of any sentence whether there be a man behind it or no."

Why is it that certain bold, bad men so often hold

sway over their fellows in almost every age and country? It is because, however bad their schemes, they are always alert and intrepid; they "mean business," and are alive in every fibre. But good men are too often timid and vacillating men; and half-hearted goodness is never a match for evil that is in dead earnest. "A politician weakly and amiably right is no match for a politician tenaciously and pugnaciously in the wrong." Arm virtue with the same weapons that make vice successful — with intense earnestness, promptness, and intrepidity — and its vantage-ground will give it the victory.

It is earnestness — the *vivida vis animi* — that leads a man to force his way through difficulty, drudgery, and dry details to success in any station or calling in life. It is not exceptional talent that is required for this purpose, so much as moral force, invincible determination; not the power, but the will, to achieve; in short, what Longfellow finely calls —

"The divine insanity of noble minds,
That never falters nor abates,
But labors, and endures, and waits
Till all that it foresees it finds,
Or what it cannot find, creates."

The surest way to grow spiritually — to confirm and invigorate any virtuous or religious principle — is to be "a live man." The very atmosphere and breath of life is action. Talents of every kind are increased by use, by trading. "Goodness and earnestness," says one of the liveliest preachers of this century, whose mind was on fire, a fire that consumed him, — Robertson, of Brighton, — "are nearly the same thing. What in the New Testament we translated a good man, in Greek is literally 'earnest.' The

Greeks felt that to be earnest was nearly identical with being good." As the sword unused rusts in the scabbard, and the limb unused shrivels and wastes away; as standing waters stagnate and breed miasma, and the blood of the sluggard, quickened by no life-giving impulse, creeps languidly through his veins, carrying no pulsations of life to limb or brain, so the Christian who is not alive and active is a feeble, shriveled Christian, — if, indeed, an indolent Christian be not a contradiction in terms.

Let us, then, remember that though the stream of life is fraught with golden sand, "it flings to the idler nothing but the froth, and he falls, like 'the fat weed that rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,' without ever having flourished." If history teaches any lesson, it is that —

"Great men were all great workers in their time,
Steadfast in purpose, to their calling true,
Keeping with single eye the end in view;
Giving their youthful days and manhood's prime
To ceaseless toil: matin and midnight chime
Often upon their willing labors grew.
In suffering schooled, their souls endurance knew,
And over difficulties rose sublime."

CHAPTER IX

THOROUGHNESS

"Semper perfectissimas clausulas actionibus imponebat. (He always rounded his actions well off, and finished them with a complete close.)" — SÜETONIUS of Julius Cæsar.

THE head of a great business house in New York City recently expressed the opinion that the great primal cause of failures in business careers is lack of thoroughness. In nine cases out of ten, it is not lack of ambition, of educational advantages, or of opportunities for self-advancement which has hindered men's success; nor have they been handicapped by ill health. The one all-sufficient and almost universal cause has been that they have never taken the pains necessary to master completely the thing they have to do. The shops and offices in our cities are filled with young men and old who occupy, and will continue to occupy, obscure minor positions, and draw meagre salaries, simply because they have hated hard work, — the only work that can give them a thorough knowledge and mastery of their callings, or commend them, if employed, to those who hire their services. We believe this is the true secret of the great mass of failures in business; but it is not more true of the mercantile than of other callings. Often young men begin an enterprise with confidence and eagerness, but when the charm and fascination of novelty have gone, when the tug of war has come, and the long pull and the

strong pull are required, their courage oozes out, their interest subsides, and they become weary, listless, and indifferent. Then they become discontented, chafe and fret because of their small incomes, and wonder why other persons of inferior gifts and opportunities forge ahead of them, utterly blind to the real reason why they are left in the lurch; viz. that they have been but half-hearted in their efforts.

The habit of skimming instead of penetrating to the core of things — of doing work in a hasty and perfunctory or slovenly manner — is a great stumbling-block to success with many Americans. Young men, in their impatience to “go ahead,” or to see immediate results, try to achieve in a twelvemonth what it has taxed all the powers and patience of even their superiors to achieve in several years; and the result is astonishing “spurts” and dashes at first, followed, in the end, by utter and humiliating failure. No work which one does trains the powers and fits them to do still higher work but that which he does thoroughly. Imperfect, slovenly work leaves a slovenly result in the mind. It is a striking remark of Suetonius, regarding Julius Cæsar, that he could hardly fail of success, for one great achievement prepared him for another, — *semper enim perfectissimas clausulas actionibus imponebat*, “for he always rounded his actions well off, and finished them with a complete close.”

How many persons fail in their careers — in the ministry, in law, medicine, trade, and business generally — because of the lack of this quality of thoroughness. Impatient for immediate results, laying no deep foundations, — they serve a brief apprenticeship to their calling, the result of which is a lack of mastery, and sooner or later a humiliating failure. Nor

is this all. A great deal of the joy of life consists in doing perfectly, or at least to the best of one's ability, everything which he attempts to do. There is a sense of satisfaction, a pride, in surveying such a work, — a work which is rounded, full, exact, complete in all its parts, — which the superficial man, who leaves his work in a slovenly, slipshod, half-finished condition, can never know. It is this conscientious completeness which turns work into art. The smallest thing, well done, becomes artistic. Occasional, spasmodic enthusiasm — fitful efforts at completeness in the execution of our tasks — is not enough. It is only steady, unremitting, painstaking laboriousness, which is not content with fitful, spasmodic effort, but strives for thoroughness and completeness, that counts in the final result.

"The good workman," says our Concord sage, R. W. Emerson, "never says, 'There, that will do,' but always, 'There, that is it . . . it will last always.' I pronounce that young man happy who is content with finding the skill he aimed at, and waits willingly until the occasion of making it appreciated shall arrive, knowing that it will not loiter. The time your rival wastes in dressing up his work for effect, hastily and for the market, you spend in study and experiments toward real knowledge and efficiency. He has thereby sold his picture or machine, or won the prize, or got the appointment; but you have raised yourself into a higher school of art, and a few years will show the advantage of the real master over the short popularity of the showman."

What is the secret of the miracles wrought by the great masters of painting and sculpture? Is it said, in reply, that they had extraordinary endowments of brain, eye, and hand? Yes; but these endowments

would have profited them nothing without arduous training and ceaseless industry. Grant Allen has most truthfully said that your Michel Angelos and your Leonardo da Vincis think no detail of anatomy or of physics beneath their lofty notice. They study the human frame as if they meant to be doctors ; the laws of matter, as if they meant to be engineers ; the nature of light, as if they meant to be physicists ; the principles of optics, as if they meant to be astronomers. So, too, every line of the greatest and most perfect poets bears traces of the utmost care and finish in workmanship ; and every line of the noblest and most exquisite prose bears evident marks of curious study in adjective and verb, in rhythm and cadence.

What was it that enabled William Pitt, when hardly more than a boy in years, to command universal attention in the House of Commons, that has coughed and hissed down so many newcomers, and to extort from Burke the encomium, " He is not a chip of the old block ; he is the old block itself " ? How was it that, at the age of twenty-four, he was able to perform the high duties of First Lord of the Admiralty and Chancellor of the Exchequer, the announcement of his appointment to which office was received in the House with a burst of laughter, and to begin so triumphantly his long and successful dictatorship ? Though he was called in derision " the heaven-born minister," his success was no accident, nor the result merely of extraordinary natural gifts, but the well-earned reward of laborious and thorough preparation. What was the secret of Alexander Hamilton's greatness — of the intellectual power of him who was one of the chief founders of our republic ; who shone in war, in law, and in statesmanship, and of whom Talleyrand said,

that, though he had known all the men of mark in his day, he had never known another equal to that American? Was it extraordinary natural ability? Let himself answer. "Men give me credit for genius," he said. "All the genius I have lies just in this: when I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings; my mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the effort which I make the people are pleased to call the fruit of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought."

Why is it that we are told to beware of the man of one book? Because all experience shows that the man who has made some great work, some masterpiece of genius, like Butler's "Analogy," Burke's "French Revolution," Chillingworth's "Religion of Protestants," Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," or Mill's "Logic," his pet, his daily and nightly companion, — studying it thoroughly and critically till, like the iron atoms of the blood, its ideas have become a part of his mental constitution, — is, as Dr. Johnson once said, "a dangerous antagonist." It is not merely the knowledge which he stores in the cells of his memory, concerning the subject or subjects of the work, which makes him a hard man to cope with, but by the intensity of his study his intellect has gained in weight and momentum, and he has developed and disciplined his reasoning powers so as to become a prompt and vigorous debater, while at the same time acquiring a completeness of execution which he will carry into every pursuit he may afterwards follow.

By what arts did William Ellery Channing triumph over the disadvantages that beset him early in his

career? He tells us that in his youth he was hardly able to buy the clothes he needed. But the idea of self-improvement had seized him with a firm grip, and he determined to be thorough. "I wanted to make the most of myself," he says; "I was not satisfied with knowing things superficially and by halves, but tried to get some comprehensive views of what I studied." In a wholly different sphere, the success of the great artificer, the late Alvan Clark, whose cunning fingers brought the stars nearer and nearer to us with each creation of his art, was due to patience and thoroughness. It is a little thing to grind glass better than other men; it is a great thing when the grinder puts his patience, his caution, the delicacy of his touch, and the careful accuracy of his measurement at the service of the astronomer, and instantly brings all the stars of heaven nearer to his gaze, while bringing within the range of observation some that he never saw before.

When Charles Dickens was asked to read a new selection, he said that he had not had time to prepare for it; he was in the habit of reading a piece once a day for six months before reciting it to the public. It is said that Ruskin's idol, the painter Turner, though he began poor, and did a deal of drudgery for a pittance, never slighted the humblest piece of work. He did everything thoroughly and conscientiously, making each day's work an advance upon that of its predecessor. "I have neglected nothing," was the explanation given by Nicolas Poussin, the greatest of French historical painters, and the superior even of Claude in landscape painting, of his success. When Macready was playing in the country theatres of England, Ireland, and Scotland, before he ventured on the London

stage, he made it a rule, whether he had large audiences or only two or three listeners, invariably to do his best. Like Barton Booth, he would play to a man in the pit. "Before the most meagre audiences ever assembled," he once said, "it has been my invariable practice to strive my best, using the opportunity as a lesson; and I am conscious of having derived great benefit from the rule. I used to call it acting to myself."

Why have our naval captains shown such a mastery of their calling? Is it not because no one of them has ever come to the command of a ship "through the cabin windows," but has begun at the bottom? because each, as a midshipman, has had "to learn all the ropes," and make himself familiar with every detail concerning a man-of-war, and the way to manage her in fair weather or foul? because he has been obliged to climb shrouds and man yards, to set and furl sails alike in winter's storm and sleet and in summer's calm?

There is no more important part of self-culture than the acquisition of the habit of thoroughness. It is a happy day in a young man's life when he has learned to recognize the charm of well-rounded, finished, perfect work. As Dr. J. F. Clarke justly says: "It is a celestial inspiration, which lifts the soul above worldly vanities and low ambitions, and ennobles the whole of life. To have a smattering of three or four languages — how little satisfaction it gives! But to be able to speak and write one with consummate ease and correctness — what a pleasure, what a sense of mastery, it imparts!"

Let every young man, then, resolve to be thorough. Let him study the examples of the foremost men in

his calling, and strive, at whatever cost of toil and drudgery and self-denial, to master completely, in all its breadth and in all its details, the art, craft, business, or profession to which he has dedicated his days. Lord Somers told Addison that, having been obliged to search among old records, the task, which at the outset was intolerably irksome, became so exceedingly pleasant that he preferred it to reading Virgil or Cicero, although classical literature had been his constant delight. Up to the point of efficiency, when one is learning a trade or profession, there is comparatively little joyousness in his labor ; but with the consciousness of mastery, of thorough knowledge and aptness, comes a feeling of strength, of self-satisfaction, of superiority, which takes away all sense of drudgery, and makes the pursuit of one's occupation a source of constant delight.

CHAPTER X

STRENGTH OF WILL AND DECISION

“Seize this very minute ;
What you can do, or dream you can, begin it ;
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.” — GOETHE.

“A subtle-tempered will,
Which bends, like perfect steel, to spring again and thrust.”

“ONE of the most important lessons that experience teaches,” says Mr. W. E. H. Lecky, in his latest work, “The Map of Life, Conduct, and Character,” “is that, on the whole, success depends more upon character than upon either intellect or fortune.” Of course, as Mr. Lecky adds, there are many works of genius which are in their own nature essentially intellectual ; yet the most splendid success in life will often be found to be due much less to extraordinary intellectual gifts than to extraordinary strength and tenacity of will — to the abnormal courage, perseverance, and work-power, which spring from it, or to the tact and judgment which make men skillful in seizing opportunities, and which, of all intellectual qualities, are most closely allied with character.

How important are these considerations, and how deeply should they be pondered by the beginners in every calling ! The larger one’s experience in human affairs, the more strongly will he be convinced that, among the moral qualities which command success, none is more essential than that strength of will which

insures prompt decision and action in all circumstances and emergencies.

Next in importance to a sound judgment is *decision*. He who combines the soundest judgment with the greatest rapidity of decision and energy in executing his plans will push his way the fastest and climb the highest up the steeps of success. Thousands of men who are possessed of every other qualification for getting on in the world fail from lack of decision. Bacon justly complains of them that through fastidiousness, timidity, or mental slowness they object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and *seldom drive business home*. The world was not made for slow, squeamish, timid people, but for those who act instantaneously and with power. Better decide wrong occasionally than be forever hesitating and vacillating, with the weakness, misery, and disaster that follow from a chronic habit of doubt. "To do anything worth doing in the world," says Sydney Smith, "we must not stand shivering on the brink, and thinking of the cold and the danger, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can. It will not do to be perpetually calculating risks and adjusting nice chances. It did all very well before the Flood; but at present a man waits and doubts and hesitates, and consults his brother and his uncle and his first cousins and his particular friends, till one day he finds that he is sixty-five years of age; that he has lost so much time in consulting friends, that he has no time left to follow their advice." On the other hand, the very resolution to succeed, when formed by a man of iron will, overleaps all barriers to success, and wins it in defiance of opposition. Like Virgil's boatman, he can succeed, because he *thinks* he can,—*possit, quia posse videtur*.

There is hardly any calling in which promptness of decision is not often imperiously demanded. The great Russian captain, Suvaroff, laid great stress on potency of will as an element of success. "You can only half will," he said to men who failed. Of what use are the most splendid other gifts, if one lacks decision — if, when an opportunity occurs, one fails to grasp it — if one hesitates, and ponders, and debates, and calculates chances, till it has fled forever? What is more pitiable than a man with no stability of purpose, who is at the mercy of the last opinion he has listened to, who is unable to make up his mind, or, having made it up, to keep to his decision, who can see and approve the right, yet drifts helplessly toward the wrong? The victories and defeats in life often turn on minutes. Crises are ever and anon occurring, the seizing of which is triumph, the neglect of which is ruin. How often a lawyer, when conducting a case in court, needs to have all his wits about him and to decide upon his policy without delay! A sudden turn in the case, the introduction of unexpected testimony, an unlooked-for ruling by the judge, an unexpected line of argument taken by the opposing counsel, may necessitate a complete "change of base" and demand an instant decision as to the course to be adopted. The physician, too, must have his mind at his fingers' ends. He must keep cool when his patient gets scared. It matters not with how much medical lore his head is crammed; it is useless unless in a critical moment it is instantly available. In trade, in financial speculation of all kinds, success depends not only on a vigilant watch of the markets, but on quick decision in acting upon the knowledge thus obtained. An hour's hesitation, even a few minutes' delay, may rob

one of a golden opportunity for adding to his worldly store.

Too many young men who might otherwise succeed in life are like the Alliance that fought the French Revolution, which, as Chamfort said, was always behind by a day, by an army, by an idea. In critical moments they vacillate, like Louis XVI., whose pitiful lack of decision and nerve prevented him, in his escape from Paris to the frontier of France, from passing round the barrier in the highway at Varennes. Instead of acting promptly, he hesitated, and discussed the fine quality of the Burgundy offered him at the village inn, and that hesitation was his ruin. In twenty or thirty minutes he might have been safe among his friends, but through his delay in the little parlor, outside events shaped themselves in the fatal grooves of that long procession of shame and suffering which ended with the guillotine. The fatal effects of indecision were never more strikingly shown than in the career of this amiable but weak-minded monarch. His fate proves that weak amiability, in its efforts to do good, may work more mischief than a vicious disposition in its efforts to do evil. With many virtues, with a genuine love for the French people, and an ardent desire to do his duty, he yet proved one of the worst rulers France ever had. Of the qualities which the necessities of his position demanded — eagle-eyed discernment, iron will, prompt and inflexible decision, and daring courage — he had none, and France was permitted to plunge into a revolution which cost millions of lives, and left terrible effects felt to this hour. The same lack of will-power hurled Louis Philippe from his throne, when a few brigades of soldiers and blank cartridges

would have saved his kingdom from the Revolution of 1848.

It is an unfortunate fact, illustrating the law of compensation, that breadth of mind — the ability to see all sides of a subject — is often fatal to decision of character. The man of many-sided mind finds every volition checked by some antagonistic idea. Hence, the development of the intellect tends to the weakening of the will. A man like Hamlet, who sees vividly the two sides of a subject, the advantages of two different policies or courses of action, finds it hard to choose either. Even in the literary profession decision of mind is of great importance. A great deal of the magic of the pen lies in the prompt concentration of the thoughts upon a single subject. Once begin to dillydally or dawdle with your theme, let the mind wander off to other topics, look at the ceiling, bite your nails, and otherwise indulge in listlessness, and you waste your time, scatter your thoughts, and squander the nervous energy necessary for your work.

Above all is decision required on the field of arms, where the issue often turns on one of two movements, executed amid clouds of smoke and the thunder of guns that seem to shake the solid globe. It was in such moments that the genius of Napoleon shone forth with the highest lustre. "The truest wisdom," he held, "is a resolute determination." He had that rare vigor of decision which enables one, when two very important objects present themselves, to seize the more important and sacrifice the other — a trait which displays not only the great captain, but the great man. He used to say that, although a battle may last a whole day, there are generally some ten minutes in which the result is practically decided; and this he

illustrated by his own course at Arcola and Rivoli. In each of these battles he saw at a certain moment that the fight was going against him, and at once adopted other tactics which won him a splendid victory. How many generals have lost the opportunity of victory through their excessive anxiety to be perfectly prepared for battle! How different Napoleon's conduct in his Egyptian expedition! Hardly had he disembarked at Alexandria when he advanced against that city, and assaulted it with a mere handful of his troops, without waiting for his artillery. "It is a principle of war," says he, "that when one can use the thunderbolt, it should be preferred to cannon." Who does not admire the intrepidity and decision of that hard fighter, Admiral Farragut, in Mobile Bay, when, despite the torpedoes that had just sunk the *Tecumseh*, he ordered the fleet to press on. "Go on!" he shouted. "Four bells. Captain Dayton, go ahead! *Jouett*, full speed!" and the dread line was passed. The torpedoes snapped, but did not explode, and a disastrous defeat was converted into a brilliant victory. Who is ignorant of the mighty results that followed Cæsar's bold decision to cross the Rubicon? or who can doubt that the swift advance of Hannibal on Rome, after the overwhelming defeat of the Romans at Cannæ, or the advance of Henry of Navarre on Paris immediately after the battle of Ivry, or that of Charles Stuart on London in 1745, would have changed the course of human history?

The well-known conversationalist, Richard Sharp, says of some noted man that his audible pronunciation of the two monosyllables "Aye" and "No" made his fortune. But most fortunes have been lost by the utterance of the former. Among the tributes to the

late editor of the "North American Review," Allen Thorndike Rice, was one by his successor, Mr. Lloyd Bryce, who began it by saying that Mr. Rice knew how to say "No!" "When I was a child," Mr. Rice used to observe, "my mother would often stand me on a chair, and make me repeat 'No, No, No.'" Wise, terse teaching! Truly has Dr. Johnson characterized "No" as "a monosyllable the easiest learned by a child, but the most difficult to practice by the man, which contains within it the import of a life, the weal or woe of an eternity!" Sainte-Beuve, the celebrated French critic, says of Fénelon, in his admirable *causerie* on the good bishop, that he lacked that irritability of good sense and of reason which makes one say "No" with vehemence — that direct, prompt, and somewhat blunt faculty which Boileau carried into literature and Bossuet into theology. This inability to say "No" with vehemence, or at least, unalterably, has been the rock on which thousands of men have been shipwrecked, who might otherwise have made life's voyage victoriously. It makes "all the difference in the world" whether one contracts early a habit of uttering with facility and frequency the little monosyllable "Yes," or that yet more diminutive one, "No." It may be an unpleasant fact to recognize, but it is none the less true, that the contracting of the one habit or the other often determines the question whether one is to be a freeman or a slave — whether he is to be a help or a clog on the world's progress — whether he is to roll through life in a coach-and-two, or hobble along on crutches.

Promptness of decision allied to invincible courage and energy was a leading quality of the eminent man of business and philanthropist, Sir Thomas Fowell

Buxton. When he advocated the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies he encountered a howling tempest of opposition. All the artillery of prayers, entreaties, flatteries, and threats was directed against him to induce him to postpone his motion in the House of Commons, but in vain. "What shall I say, when I hear people abusing you?" asked one of his friends when the storm was fiercest. "Say," he replied, snapping his fingers — "say *that!*"

Will you tell me that strength of will is inborn, and cannot be acquired? Will you say that decision, like bodily vigor, is God-given — purely constitutional — a product of organization and temperament — and, therefore, not capable of culture? If you think so, you have a supporter of your opinion in the sage of Concord. "Success," says Emerson, "is a constitutional trait. The affirmative force is in one and not in another, as one horse has the spring in himself and another in the whip." If this be true, then all exhortations to young men to be decided are a waste of words. It is true that some men are born with a firm texture of muscle, tough sinews, strong nerves, and, perhaps in consequence, with great force of will, while other men are born with feeble will-power. You can no more make a Luther, a Knox, a Napoleon, or an Andrew Jackson out of a man with a flabby will than you can make lace ruffles out of hemp, or an oaken beam out of pine wood. But does this prove that decision may not be acquired by those who lack it, or strengthened by those in whom it is weak? By no means. As many other human powers have not only a physical basis in the organization but a moral basis in the soul, why may it not be the same with will-power and decision of character? No one will deny

that there are instinctive powers of perception and cultivated powers of perception, and instinctive good temper and a good temper which is the product of culture, a natural conscience and a conscience that has been trained and educated.

Many men are constitutionally timid ; but do not some of them conquer their timidity by effort and become conspicuous for heroism ? History, biography, and daily experience show that the most shrinking pusillanimity may be overcome by moral considerations, and that the most daring courage may be acquired and established by habit. Frederick the Great fled from his first battle like the veriest poltroon ; yet did he not afterward astonish the world by his bravery amid the most appalling military disasters ? William Wirt tells of an inferior officer in our Revolutionary War who was nickamed “ Captain Death,” and who was singled out for the most desperate enterprises. If a “ forlorn hope ” was to be sent out or a dangerous battery to be stormed, he was always chosen to lead the adventure ; yet it was observed that he was never called up for the purpose that he did not turn as pale as his namesake at the proposal, and tremble from head to foot. Still he never failed to face the danger, and went unscathed through all the showers of bullets he encountered. If cowardice may be overcome by moral considerations, by the sense of shame, training, and discipline, why may not the infirmity of irresolution be conquered, and a habit of decision be formed in the same way ? Certainly it can ; and, moreover, the quickness and tenacity of decision which are the growth of culture, painstaking, and a sensitive conscience give one a far greater power to do and to endure than the organic, instinctive will-force and

resolution hidden in the convolutions of the brain, and in the force which drives the blood through the arteries.

Dr. J. F. Clarke, in his admirable work on Self-Culture, after admitting that there is a constitutional force of will which insures success, adds: "But success does not come merely from constitutional force; if it did, the savage would not retire before the civilized man. Culture adds a new force to nature. The early white settlers of Kentucky soon became more than a match for the Indians in everything in which the Indian excelled. They learned to know the forest signs as well as the Indians, or even better; they became better marksmen, quicker in their perceptions, more rapid in their actions, and in a hand-to-hand struggle they could master the Indian. Education in the white man has added a force to nature."

William Wirt, in his celebrated address to the students of Rutgers College about fifty years ago, — an address which was afterwards published in London and translated into French and German, — said: "Success in life depends far more upon decision of character than upon the possession of what is called genius. . . . The man who is perpetually hesitating as to which of two things he will do, will do neither. . . . Gentlemen, take your course wisely, but firmly; and having taken it, hold upon it with heroic resolution, and the Alps and Pyrenees will sink before you. The whole empire of learning will be at your feet."

Let every young man who would be a power, not a cipher in the world, give heed to these noble words of Wirt. Let him shut his ears to the enfeebling, dispiriting doctrines of Fatalism, and cultivate decision of character. Let him strive to attain that strength

of will, that decisiveness of purpose and of action by which life's Gordian knots are instantly cut, obstacles overcome, perplexities expelled like a fog before a stiff northwester, and success snatched from the jaws of death and despair. Failing in this, his may be the despairing wail of the gifted Hartley Coleridge : —

“ Oh, woeful impotence of weak resolve,
Recorded rashly to the writer's shame !
Days pass away, and Time's large orbs revolve,
And every day beholds me still the same ;
Till oft-neglected purpose loses aim,
And hope becomes a flat, unheeded lie,
And Conscience, weary of the work of blame,
In seeming slumbers droops her wistful eye,
As if she would resign her unregarded ministry.”

“ You are now at the age,” said the eloquent Lamennais, addressing a gay youth, “ at which a decision must be formed by you ; a little later, and you may have to groan within the tomb which you yourself have dug, without the power of rolling away the stone. That which the easiest becomes a habit in us is the will. Learn, then, to will strongly and decisively ; thus fix your floating life, and leave it no longer to be carried hither and thither, like a withered leaf, by every wind that blows.”

CHAPTER XI

BE, AND RELY UPON, YOURSELF

“I learned that no man in God’s wide earth is either willing or able to help any other man.” — PESTALOZZI.

SOME fifty years ago an enterprising costumer in New York used to head all his advertisements with the words in large capitals, “I am myself alone!” The reader smiled at the announcement as a mark of eccentricity; but would it not be better for themselves and the community, if men generally would cherish the same self-estimate? Would not the world be benefited if every man in it should believe, and feel in the very centre of his being, that he is, and can be, himself only — would cease striving to be somebody else, and would cherish that self-respect which Sir Philip Sidney regarded as the “chief nurse of magnanimity,” and which Sir John Herschel deemed “the corner stone of all virtue!” The first duty of every man in starting in life is to get a clear, definite, adequate sense of his own selfhood or personality, and then to give to his faculties of body, mind, and soul the highest possible development. This is the specific work of civilization. In savagery every man is the duplicate of another. In civilization, which offers the freedom and the variety of situations necessary to develop individual peculiarities and traits, men are widely contrasted.

Every man who would make the most of himself should say to himself: "I am myself alone. I have no duplicate. When God created me he differentiated me from all other men. I have peculiar gifts, however small. If others can do things which I cannot, I, too, can do things which they cannot do. It is my duty to develop to the utmost the powers given to me, to give to them the highest possible perfection, and not allow my employments, my environment, or the example of others to rob me of my selfhood, my distinctive personality. An integral and responsible part of the great system of society, I owe it to society and to the Author of my being, to evoke the good elements of my nature and to repress the bad, to the best of my ability."

Find out, therefore, young man, by a searching self-examination, what you are, of what materials you are made up, what are your capabilities and defects, and then resolve to get out of yourself the most that is possible. Cultivate all your faculties, mental, moral, spiritual, and social, and let nothing within you run to waste. Do not skulk up and down in the world like a charity boy, an interloper, or as if apologizing for having been born. Do not be an echo, a copyist, an imitator, or repeater of some one else, but be simply yourself. Remember that, as our Concord sage has said, Shakespeares will never be made by the study of Shakespeare — that the Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. In choosing a calling consult your adaptations, your natural bent, and follow the promptings — the strong, constant promptings, not the whims or fleeting inclinations — of your own nature. Be true to yourself, if you would have the world be true to you. Having found out where

your main strength lies, the pursuit for which you are best fitted, follow that pursuit bravely, manfully, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, forward nor backward. Again, do not beg of others an indorsement of your abilities. If you are conscious of ability, you are your own best indorser. Edward Emerson, in his sketch of his father's life, tells of a certain pushing young lecturer who visited Concord, and, seeing Mr. Emerson in his audience, promptly asked an acquaintance for a note of introduction. Early the next evening, armed with his note, he appeared at Emerson's door. He was met with the courtesy that never failed to any guest, no matter how wearying. The young lecturer, taking the initiative, talked of his work and his success; he told of the various noted men who had given him indorsement, and finally he asked Mr. Emerson himself to give him one. "My young friend," Emerson replied, "do you not know that there is but one person who can recommend you?" "Who is that, sir?" the young man asked, puzzled but alert. The answer came gravely, almost solemnly, "Yourself." A better reply could not have been given. But whether you ask advice or not, you will find at every turn friends and relatives bursting with advice which they are only too ready to volunteer, crying "Lo, here!" and, "Lo, there!" but if you adopt their counsel, and come to grief, you will find that they have mysteriously disappeared, or are powerless to help you.

Books well chosen are among the best friends and helpers; but even their counsel must not be adopted too implicitly. What says the strenuous advocate of self-trust we have just quoted? "They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book,

than be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and be made a satellite instead of a system." In reading the best books, — the masterpieces on which the ages have stamped their approval, — you take your predecessors into counsel; they fill up the gaps of your personal experience and acquisitions, stimulate your thinking faculty, and furnish you with the hived wisdom of the ages. But you should not veil your eyes in abject shame before their authority, however awe-inspiring, but, as some one has said, become modestly defiant in their presence, and vindicate the equal divinity of your nature. "Go to; I would wrestle with thee!" should be the thought dominant in your mind, and not a slavish submission to a great reputation; and you should not quit the struggle until your mettle has been fully tested.

All the men who have made their mark in the world have done so, not by imitation, which they would have scorned, but by self-assertion. It has been well observed that the god of our Scandinavian ancestors was not a Zeus, hurling thunderbolts, but a Thor, wielding a hammer. The Greek god shed arrows of fate; the Scandinavian beat down obstacles. What was it that made German unity, so long the despairing cry of patriotic Teutons, an accomplished fact? Was it not the sublime self-confidence of the man of "blood and iron," the stalwart Bismarck, who years before had said of the longed-for change, when it seemed most hopeless, "It will come, and it will come through me." One of the ablest business men of New York, Mr. D. O. Mills, recently said that "a great many young men waste their best years in waiting to fill dead men's shoes. When they get them, the shoes are usually several sizes too large for their new owners." There

was never a truer proverb than the saying that rich young men, who begin where their fathers left off, usually leave off where their fathers began. Our motive power is found, not in what we have, but in what we lack; and therefore inherited wealth, except in rare cases, instead of spurring to further acquisition, becomes "a title deed to sloth."

An eminent English lawyer, Sir James Scarlett, in speaking of the difficulty of getting a start in his profession, once said that no man ought to be called to the bar who has not an income of a hundred pounds a year. There was never a greater mistake. A thousand lives of beginners, not only in law, but in various other callings, might be cited to prove the contrary, to show that such an independent income would generally be fatal to success. We should hesitate to differ from so high an authority on the strength of our own judgment; but other authorities, even more weighty, have held an opinion exactly the contrary to Scarlett's; they have held that an assured income, even though very moderate, would destroy the chief stimulus to exertion. Lord Chancellor Talbot said once, as truly as pithily, that "parts and poverty are the only things needed by the law student." When a parent consulted Lord Chancellor Thurlow concerning the best means his son could adopt to secure success at the bar, the jurist replied: "Let your son spend his own fortune, marry, and spend his wife's, and then go to the bar; there will be little fear of his failure." A strange counsel, the reader may exclaim; but Thurlow's observation had taught him that the man who has a sure means of support has not that inducement to put his shoulder to the wheel, which stimulates and goads him who feels the pressure of poverty. For

the same reason Thurlow withheld from Lord Chancellor Eldon, when he was a poor struggling lawyer, a commissionship of bankruptcy which he had promised him, saying that it was a favor to Eldon to withhold it. "He had learnt," says Eldon, "that I was by nature very indolent, and that it was only want that could make me very industrious."

One of the first lessons which a young man needs to learn, if he would get on in the world or achieve any good for himself or others, is the necessity of self-reliance. It is but little, at best, that others can do for him, however willing to help him on. Friends, affection, and human sympathy may go with us to the beach, but every man must set sail for himself in the voyage of life and steer his own ship. By his own skill and observation of the stars and the weather must he pilot himself amid the rocks and quicksands and whirlpools that threaten to wreck him, and with his own right arm must he defend himself from the pirates and freebooters that infest every sea. The difficulties, hardships, struggles, and trials which the beginner deprecates are positive blessings. They knit his sinews more firmly and teach him, if he boldly confronts them, self-confidence, just as by wrestling with a powerful athlete we increase our own strength and learn the secret of his skill. It was by having to grapple early and often in his legal career with that giant of the bar, Jeremiah Mason, that Daniel Webster acquired his mastery of the law and its practice.

"Ability and necessity," said that wise teacher Pythagoras, "dwell near each other." It is not in the sheltered garden, still less in the hothouse, but on exposed cliffs, where the storms rage most violently, that the toughest plants are reared. Peril is the very ele-

ment in which power is developed. How does the great statesman become such? Not, to use a phrase of Burke's, by being "rocked and swaddled and dandled into a legislator," but by persistence through continual failures and defeats. So with the diplomatist; a Talleyrand, a Palmerston, or a Bismarck becomes master of his art, not chiefly by triumphing, but by being baffled, thwarted, checkmated, again and again. One of the greatest mistakes which parents make is to overwork and painfully scrimp and economize, that they may leave at death means enough to give their vigorous and healthy children "a start in the world;" it is rather an almost certain means of keeping them in poverty and obscurity. Who are the foremost men at the bar, in medicine, and in the pulpit? Nine tenths of them have found their motive power in what they lacked; they have been spurred on by a consciousness of want and self-dependence, and have climbed up the steepes of their profession by their own unassisted energies.

So in all other pursuits. What was the course pursued by those merchants, engineers, musical composers, painters, and artists of every kind who have risen to eminence from the chilling depths of obscurity, poverty, and want? Did they beg the help of other men? Did they feel a dim, indistinct consciousness that they might, could, or would do something, *if* they only knew what it was, and so wander about in search of a suitable employment? Did they spend a long time in anxiously calculating risks and adjusting chances, and seek "to take a bond of fate, and make assurance doubly sure"? No such thing. Read the lives of these men, and you will learn that they had a deep and abiding faith in themselves,

—that they early made up their minds what they wished to do, and set themselves with all the energy they could command to do it. If mechanics, they converted into magician's wands the poorest tools of their trade; if philosophers, they studied the phenomena of nature as readily in the open air as in an observatory or laboratory; if painters, they sketched with chalk or charcoal if necessary, or plundered the family cat for material for their brushes; if poets, they poured forth their golden songs from the garret or the plough-tail.

The biographies of the most successful men in all the callings of life show that they found out for what work they were fitted, and did it with all their might, not only without aid or advice from brothers or uncles or first cousins or particular friends, but often in defiance of advice, warnings, remonstrances, opposition, and sneers. To have little or no faith in one's self, to lean on others for support, to be always an imitator or copyist, to be perpetually thinking of what one might, could, or would do under "more favorable circumstances," or if only this thing or that were different,—these are fatal signs of lack of power. The successful man in these days of overstocked professions and intense competition is he who, instead of sighing, "if I but had an opening!" makes a way when he cannot find one; who compels the very difficulties and hindrances at which other men are moaning and standing still to be ministers and aids to his advancement. The block of granite, which is an obstacle in their pathway, becomes a stepping-stone in his. A lad who played the piano very skillfully once said to Mozart, "Herr Kapellmeister, I should like very much to compose something. How am I to begin?"

“Pho, pho!” said Mozart, “you must wait.”

“But you,” rejoined the boy, “composed much earlier.”

“But I asked nothing about it,” retorted Mozart. “If one has the spirit of a composer, he writes because he cannot help it.”

In studying the lives of successful and unsuccessful men, the question has often suggested itself to us, What is it that differentiates two youths so that, placed in the same circumstances, — subjected alike to those “twin jailers of the human heart, low birth and iron fortune,” — one will be full of curiosity, eager for knowledge, burning to know the meanings of novel words, the causes of things, etc.; while the other, incurious, will plod on in stolid ignorance, prying into no secrets, never once asking, “Why is this thing so?” “What does that strange word mean?” and content to travel in the one low, unchanging rut in which he started, without the faintest desire for self-culture?

This question has been suggested to us by the history of a poor, friendless English boy, the child of the obscurest parents, — Samuel Lee, born in 1783, died in 1852, — whose achievements in self-culture under the most disheartening circumstances almost stagger belief. Certainly they are more marvelous than almost any of those portrayed by Craik in his well-known book, “The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties.” Sent to a charity school at Lognor, near Shrewsbury, the lad made such snail-like progress that his master pronounced him one of the dullest boys that ever had passed under his hand. Apprenticed to a carpenter, he worked at the trade until he was twenty-one, and to occupy his vacant hours took to reading. Puzzled by some Latin words which he encountered, and hear-

ing the Latin language read in a Catholic chapel where he was working, he resolved, at the age of seventeen, to learn that tongue. Buying a second-hand Latin grammar, he rose early and studied late till he had learned it by heart. He next bought an old Latin dictionary and Beza's Latin Testament, and began translating. In his eighteenth year he read, unaided, the Latin Bible, Florus, some of Cicero's Orationes, Cæsar's "Commentaries," Justin, Sallust, Virgil, Horace's Odes, and Ovid's Epistles. But, asks the reader, as he had to live on his wages (then six shillings a week; later, eight shillings), how could he buy all these books? "I never had all at once," said the poor student, "but generally read one book, and sold it, the price of which, with a little added, enabled me to buy another; and this, being read, was sold to procure the next."

Ending his apprenticeship at carpentry, he resolved to learn Greek, and, buying a Greek grammar, a Testament, and Schrevelius's Lexicon, set himself to master that difficult tongue. He wrote out all of Huntingford's "Greek Exercises," and then translated Xenophon's "Cyropædia," Plato's "Dialogues," parts of Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey," Pythagoras's "Golden Verses," with Hierocles's "Commentary," Lucian's "Dialogues of the Dead," some of the Greek "Poetæ Minores," and the "Antigone" of Sophocles. While repairing, one day, some benches in a synagogue, he saw a Hebrew Bible, and felt a desire to read it. An inflammation of the eyes and "every possible discouragement" from those around him now threatened to hinder his progress; but study had become "his greatest happiness," and he returned to it daily for the enjoyment it yielded and as a rest

from manual toil. Buying Bythner's Hebrew Grammar, with his "*Lyra Prophetica*" and a Psalter, he read the latter, Onkelos's Targum, some of the Syriac Testament, and some of the Samaritan Pentateuch.

He was now nearly twenty-five years old, and had a stock of tools worth £25. Sent to Worcester to repair a house, he began to reflect that his studies, however fascinating, were practically useless to one in his situation, and, marrying, sold his books, and looked to his trade of carpentry as his only means of self-support. A carpenter he might have remained to the end of his days, but for a fire in the house he was repairing, which destroyed the chest of tools with which he was earning a living. Destitution now stared him in the face. He was cast upon the world, as he said, "without a friend, a shilling, or any means of subsistence." But this very accident, which seemed to him to bode nothing but ruin, was ultimately the very means of lifting him out of obscurity and conducting him to the high position which his arduous labors had fitted him to fill. Too poor to buy new tools, he thought, while devising means to keep the wolf from his door, of opening a primary school and teaching children their letters and some of the most elementary branches of education; but with all his mastery of languages, he was defective in the humblest branches of knowledge, and therefore set promptly and resolutely to work to learn arithmetic and penmanship sufficiently to teach them to little children.

Gradually the extraordinary attainments and simple, sterling character of Lee won him friends, and the story of "the learned carpenter" was bruited far and wide. Presently the news of his disaster reached the

ears of Rev. Dr. Scott, a kind-hearted clergyman of his native village, who sent for him, and, on investigating his acquirements, found an erudition which filled him with surprise. Supplied by this gentleman, and by an eminent Oriental scholar to whom the doctor introduced him, with the necessary books, Lee now attacked and mastered in succession the Arabic, Persian, and Hindoostanee tongues, continuing to prosecute his studies even while serving as a private in the local militia. At length his benefactor found him a master's situation in a school in Shrewsbury, and also an opportunity to teach in private; and finally, in 1813, helped him, at the age of thirty, to enter the University of Cambridge, from which, after a course of study in which, strange to say, he distinguished himself by his *mathematical* acquirements, he was graduated in 1818.

In 1819 Lee was elected to fill the chair of Arabic in the University. In 1822 he received the degree of D. D. from the University of Halle, and in 1833 the same from the University of Cambridge. At this time he was master of eighteen languages. In 1831 he was made professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge, and held the chair till 1848, when he became rector of Barley, where he died on December 16, 1852. Lack of space prevents us from naming the many learned, critical, theological, and historical works, and translations of the Bible into Syriac and Malay, and of certain books of it into Arabic, Coptic, Persian, and Hindoostanee, made by this tireless scholar, who was certainly one of the profoundest linguists of his age.

What an extraordinary example of self-education does his life present! How full of cheer and inspira-

tion to poor, struggling young students of apparently mediocre abilities! It shows that no situation in life is so low as not to afford opportunities for self-culture and usefulness. As the poor gardener's boy said to the Duke of Argyle, who asked how he had learned to read Newton's "Principia," "One has only to know the twenty-six letters of the alphabet in order to learn everything else that one wishes." Lee's story reveals, again, a radical, inherent difference in him from other youths, that accounts for his ultimate eminence and their obscurity. Instead of asking some educated man to tell him the meaning of the Latin words he encountered, he got a dictionary and taught himself. Not one other boy in ten thousand — more probably, in fifty thousand — would have done this. Finally, Lee's life shows that, no matter what lions are in the way, the poor, struggling youth has but to persevere in his efforts at self-culture, and he will infallibly find helpers and his proper place at last.

CHAPTER XII

PLUCK

"The stupid cant, 'He went too far,' despise,
And learn that to be bold is to be wise." — SWIFT.

A WRITER in "Blackwood's Magazine" relates a striking incident in the life of Nassau William Senior, professor of political economy at Oxford University. When examined for his bachelor's degree he was "plucked." He failed in divinity, which, as it was then the first subject on which the aspirant was examined, rendered fruitless any amount of general acquisition, and insured immediate rejection. Nowise distrustful of himself, the young man determined to try again, and meanwhile looked out for a private tutor with whom to read. He called upon Richard Whately, afterward archbishop of Dublin, and expressed a wish to be received by him as his pupil. Whately scarcely took the trouble to look his visitor in the face, but coolly answered,—

"You were plucked, I believe. I never receive pupils unless I see reason to assume that they mean to aspire at honors."

"I mean to aspire at honors."

"You do, do you?" was the rejoinder. "May I ask what class you intend to take?"

"A first class," said Senior coolly.

Whately's brow relaxed. He seemed tickled with

the idea that a lad who had been plucked in November should propose to get into the first class in March ; and he at once desired the plucky youth to come to be coached. Never were tutor and pupil better matched. Senior read hard, went up into the schools in March, and came out with the highest honors. Similar to the pluck of this brave Oxford student was that manifested a few years ago by an American student, Martin A. Quinn, who, when a ragged employee on a farm, resolved to get a college education, and set about obtaining the means. He began, we are told, by trading with his neighbors until he owned a pig, which he raised and sold to buy a calf. The calf grew into a cow, which was sold, and more pigs and calves were bought. By the time he was eighteen Quinn had earned two hundred dollars. With this money he bought six good milk cows, which he shipped from his home in Indiana to Chicago, riding along in the freight train to care for them. He reached the city with his cows and eleven dollars in cash. Leaving his cows at the stock yards, he went straight to the University of Chicago and matriculated. Having done this, he sought the steward of the college, told his story, and laid a proposition before him. Milk was costing the college twenty-five cents a gallon. Quinn agreed to furnish it at twenty cents. The agreement was made, and the young undergraduate dairyman went to seek a place to house his herd. One was found, and arrangements for pasture were made. For four years Quinn cared for those cows, milked them every morning at four o'clock, strained the milk, and carried it to the steward. From it he averaged three dollars and sixty cents a day, and on this he lived and furnished food and shelter for the

cows. When he finally graduated he sold the cows for one hundred and eighty dollars, with which he bought books to study law at Lafayette, Ind.

Among the elements of worldly success, especially in the higher walks of life, is there one more vital than that which this young man manifested? Who does not admire the pluck which this incident exemplifies? History abounds with illustrations showing that it is this bull-dog tenacity of purpose that wins life's battles, whether fought in the field, the mart, the senate, or the forum. In the darkest hours of men's lives, it has turned defeat into victory, gloom into sunshine. It was the pluck of Athanasius that enabled him, though maligned by his Christian brethren, though five times expelled from his archiepiscopal palace, and for twenty years an exile and a fugitive, compelled to hide himself from the rage of three successive Roman emperors, to triumph at last over all his foes, and establish the doctrine with which his name is identified.

It was the pluck of Isaac Newton that led him, when he stood at school at the bottom of the lowermost form but one, to thrash the boy above him who had kicked him, and then to determine to vanquish him as a scholar, which he also did, rising to the top of his class. It was this quality that was preëminent in Liebig in his youth — the "booby" of his school, who, when sneeringly asked one day by the master what he proposed to become, since he was so poor a scholar, answered that he would be a chemist — a reply which provoked a laugh of derision from the whole school. Yet he lived to become one of the most eminent chemists of modern Europe. Who can think without a thrill of admiration of that glover's appren-

tice in Glasgow, Scotland, who battled with almost incredible earnestness and persistence against the obstacles that confronted him in the acquisition of knowledge? Living with a relative, an old woman who was too poor to afford him a candle or even a bright firelight, he read books in the street by the light of a shop window and, when the shop was closed, climbed a lamp-post, and, clinging to it with one hand, held his book in the other, and thus mastered its contents. Who can wonder that he became one of his country's eminent scholars? It was by "barn-storming," by a long and dreary apprenticeship in obscure districts of England, that Kean, as he himself declared, won his spurs as an actor. How long and strenuously, against baffling discouragements, did Edison labor to make the phonograph produce an aspirated sound! "From eighteen to twenty hours a day, for the last seven months, I have worked at this single word — *specia*. I sent into the phonograph 'specia,' 'specia,' 'specia;' but the instrument responded 'pecia,' 'pecia,' 'pecia.' It was enough to drive one mad. But I held firm, and I have succeeded."

What was it that stung the little, ugly, stuttering Jack Curran into eloquence, and led him to toil till he had become one of the most powerful and brilliant advocates in Great Britain? It was the sarcasm of a member of a club, — the nickname of "Orator Mum" given to him, a law student, when, rising one evening to speak, he had failed in a most humiliating way, and sat down without uttering a word. What did he then do? Give up? No; he began at once committing to memory and declaiming, day after day, for several hours, with earnestness and distinctness of enunciation, before a mirror, passages from the masterpieces of lit-

erature. By this practice he gradually overcame his defects, and, having Lord Eldon's requisite to distinction, viz., "to be not worth a shilling," rose, in spite of his physical disadvantages and inborn shyness, to the Alpine heights of his profession. So miserably poor was he at his start in life that, writing afterward to a friend about his marriage, he said, "My wife and I were the only furniture of our apartments, and as to my rent, it stood pretty much the same chance of liquidation as the national debt." John Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, was born a cripple, and could not at any time in life move without his man and his crutch. "I was never," he once said, "without a dull aching pain of that side." He suffered also from daily epileptic fits; yet he became a member of Oliver Cromwell's Council, with reference to which that man of iron will used to say that "there was no one whom he was more at a loss how to manage than that Marcus Tullius Cicero, the little man with three names," meaning Shaftesbury. "The little man" was afterward made chancellor by Charles II., and it is to him that every Englishman and every American is indebted for that sheet-anchor of their liberties, the Habeas Corpus act. Imprisoned in the Tower by the capricious king, and compelled, at last, to fly to Holland, where he died, he seems never for a moment to have lost his self-confidence, his pluck, or his elasticity and buoyancy of spirits.

Some of the most extraordinary examples of pluck under disheartening circumstances have been furnished by military commanders. Napoleon said of one of his marshals, Massena, that "he was not himself until the battle began to go against him; then, when the dead fell in ranks about him, were awakened

his powers of combination, and he put on terror and victory as a robe." Blücher, the obstinate old Prussian general, lost nine battles out of ten, but he quickly rallied, and showed to Napoleon, after every defeat, a more formidable front than before. Defeated and wounded, and thrown from his horse at Ligny, he led his troops two days later through mud, up steep defiles, amid torrents of rain, from Wavre to Waterloo, and won with Wellington the immortal victory that sealed the fate of his foe. It was the bold onset made by a few resolute men against troops that had maintained successfully a hard day's combat, that turned the scale, at last, at Lutzen, in favor of the Swedes and broke the charm of Wallenstein's invincibility. Not inferior to Massena and the Swedish commanders in stubborn pluck and valor under the most adverse circumstances, was our own great captain in the Civil War, George Henry Thomas, who won at Mill Springs the first real victory for the Union cause after the disaster of Bull Run; who in Chattanooga, in reply to the despairing message of Grant to hold the town, replied, "We will hold the town till we starve;" who at the battle of Stone River, when, by an overwhelming charge of the enemy, the whole right wing of the Federal army was swept back three miles, and its very existence imperiled, firmly held his ground with the centre, and two days afterward, by a bold and fiery attack on the enemy, compelled his retreat; and who in the fierce and desperate contest at Chickamauga, the bloodiest fight recorded in history, with six only out of thirteen divisions, stubbornly held his ground against five corps of the Confederate army flushed with seeming victory, after all the rest of the Union troops had been driven from the field.

Brilliant as are these instances, the literary calling has shown examples of grit as notable as any seen in the field of arms. Look at Gibbon, toiling for twenty years with Herculean industry over his monumental history of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"! Seven years of ceaseless labor were spent in gathering and meditating on the materials for the work, the enormous scope of which rendered indispensable the most vast and accurate knowledge, not only of the whole range of classical, Byzantine, mediæval and Oriental literature during upward of thirteen centuries, but also of some of the greatest religious and social changes that have shaped the destinies of man, — the rise of Christianity, the Mus-sulman dominion, and the institutions of feudalism and chivalry. The amount of reading, almost wholly in foreign tongues, involved in such a task might well appall the most indefatigable student. The task was, nevertheless, achieved; but when the historian began the labor of writing his great work, "all was dark and doubtful," and he was tempted to throw away all his labor. Girding up his loins with heroic resolution, he toiled on for thirteen years more, at the end of which his colossal task was done and the gulf between ancient and modern history was bridged.

See a Milton dictating his immortal epic in old age and in a world he cannot see; a Prescott and a Parkman writing their histories under constant physical discouragements; a Balzac consolidating his genius in a garret in Paris, in silence, in hunger, and in the deepest poverty; and a Bulwer giving to the world a hundred volumes of novels, essays, plays, history, and epic and satirical poems, in spite of ill health and incessant sneers at his shallowness and dandyism!

What lessons are these for young men ! “ I have been watching the careers of young men in this city for thirty years,” said an eminent New York preacher — Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler — recently, “ and I find that the chief difference between the successful and the failures lies in the single element of *staying power*.” It is by tenacity of purpose, rather than by sudden dash, however brilliant, that success is won. Hindrances, checks, trials, instead of defeating one, should bring out one’s native force. “ Feeble natures,” on the contrary, as Balzac strikingly says, “ live in their sorrows, instead of converting them into apothegms of experience. They are saturated with them, and they consume themselves by sinking back each day into the misfortunes of the past. *To forget* is the great secret of strong and creative existences, — to forget after the manner of Nature, which knows no past, and begins again every hour the mysteries of her indefatigable productiveness.” Harken to an old English dramatist : —

“ The wise and active conquer difficulties
By daring to attempt them ; sloth and folly
Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and hazard,
And make the impossibility they fear.” •

CHAPTER XIII

TENACITY OF PURPOSE

“The secret of success is constancy to purpose.”— BEACONSFIELD.

WHAT is the one infallible gauge or index of a man's power, the criterion or test of the work he will be likely to accomplish in the world? Is it brilliancy of intellect, versatility of talent, breadth and depth of knowledge, or the impetuosity and dash with which he enters upon his career? No; all experience shows that with all these qualifications he may fail. To all other qualities he must add persistence, or they will be of little avail. It is grip and grit that conquer success; not the vigor with which one takes hold of his task, but the doggedness with which he holds on after he has taken hold. “I know of no such unquestionable badge and ensign of a sovereign mind,” says Ralph Wãldo Emerson, “as that tenacity of purpose which, through all changes of companions, of parties, or fortunes, changes never, bates no jot of heart or hope, but wearies out opposition, and arrives at its goal.”

When Frank Carpenter, the artist, asked President Lincoln how Grant impressed him, as compared with other generals, the President replied: “The great thing about Grant is cool persistency of purpose. He is not easily excited; he's got the grip of a bulldog; and when he once gets his teeth in, nothing can shake

him off." It is this bull-dog grip, this tenacity of purpose, that holds on when others let go, which succeeds in every sphere of effort.

There are no obstacles so great or overwhelming that patience, grit, and persistence, with even mediocre talents, will not overcome them in the end. It is the young man whom labor cannot weary nor enemies scare nor drudgery disgust — who confronts reverses with an unflinching front, and is turned aside from his settled purpose neither by the world's "dread laugh" nor by its frown — that wins in the struggle of life. "It is the gift of plodding," said the Dominion's great statesman and premier, Sir Wilfred Laurier, recently to a correspondent of "Success," in a conversation on the causes of worldly success. "It is not a popular axiom just now," he continued, "when all the world seems in a mad rush; but success comes from plodding. The young man who determines above all things else to become rich, and who closes his eyes to everything but the almighty dollar, who stops at nothing, and spares no time or pains in the effort for wealth, but who, at the end of his life, can write his check for a million of dollars, no doubt considers that he has won success. The scholar who burns the midnight oil, who turns deaf ears to the siren voice of pleasure and buries himself in his books, succeeds in winning knowledge. The statesman who bends every energy toward mastering statecraft is successful in becoming the great leader of his party. They all succeed, and why? Because they have possessed the gift of plodding."

Sir Wilfred next spoke of two young men about to be admitted, from a certain school, to the Canadian bar. "I know them well," he said. "One of them

is unusually bright, — I think I never met a more fortunately equipped lad. He has a most receptive memory, and a pleasing manner of address. He can learn anything he undertakes ; and, by consequence, it was an easy matter for him to lead his classes, when he so determined. He has the natural endowment to make a great lawyer ; and yet I doubt, I exceedingly doubt, if he will ever become one, because he lacks perseverance. While he begins everything well, he seldom ends anything well. The other lad has no such bright endowments, — none of the flash and brilliancy of the first one ; but I feel morally certain that there is a great future before him. He is n't ashamed to plod ; he is grit all the way through. He undertakes a matter, and, if it is hard, he grapples with it, he tussles with it, and he sticks to it until he conquers it. He is a French boy, but in his power of perseverance he is thoroughly Scottish, and that is why I say that he will one day become a great jurist. He will succeed, because he has the gift of plodding." We beg our readers to consider well these thoughtful and suggestive words of the Canadian statesman, which have the more weight because they come from the lips of a brilliant and exceedingly popular public speaker, who would naturally be supposed to attach more value to quickness and dash than to less shining qualities, — to the swiftness of the hare than to the staying power of the tortoise.

The hopes of thousands of promising young men are blasted because they lack faith, courage, and staying power, — that patient and persistent energy which Dickens tells us began to be matured in him when he was a boy tying pots of blacking, and which was the source of all his successes as a novelist. Men

moan over their "bad luck," who stick to no plan or project long enough to bring it to a successful issue. They pursue one calling, and then another, try one means of success after another, but finding obstacles and hindrances everywhere, push nothing to a conclusion, till one day they find their hair turning gray, and they are hopelessly side-tracked. One of the saddest spectacles in life, but not uncommon, is to see a man collapse when just in sight of the goal. Hundreds give up the struggle and lie down in the mire, who might succeed if they would hold on a little longer; while others win a victory in a hard struggle, because—as did the Oxford University crew, in its '92 boat race with that of Cambridge—at the last moment they make more vigorous efforts than before. "When you get in a tight place, and everything goes against you until it seems as if you cannot hold on a minute longer," says the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin"—who wrote that work in the intervals of sweeping, cooking, and other domestic labors—"never give up; for that is just the place and the time that the tide'll turn." "Never despair," says Burke; "but if you do, work on in despair."

William Hazlitt, the brilliant essayist, observes in a paper on Thought and Action, that a real, entire devotion to any object always succeeds. The strong sympathy with which we wish and imagine realizes it, dissipates all obstacles, removes all scruples. He cites as illustration the case of a lover. "The disappointed lover," he says, "may complain as much as he pleases. He was himself to blame. He was a half-witted, wishy-washy fellow. His love might be as great as he makes it out; but it was not his ruling passion. His fear, his pride, his vanity, was greater.

Let any one's whole soul be steeped in this passion, let him think and care for nothing else; let nothing cool, divert, or intimidate him; let the ideal feeling become an actual one, and take possession of his whole faculties, looks, and manners, and I will answer for his success."

It is said that when President Johnson was trying to drive the great war secretary, Edwin M. Stanton, from the cabinet because he opposed the President's reactionary policy in the South, Charles Sumner sent to the secretary this pithy message, "Stanton, stick!" Stanton did stick, fearless of any consequences that might ensue from his firmness. An indispensable element of success to-day, and at all times, is the ability to "stick" to any purpose or plan one has formed, or to any calling upon which one has entered. No one can hope to get on in the world, except by prolonged and concentrated effort in some one line of labor till the point of mastery is reached. Half-heartedness — spasmodic, intermittent effort, furious to-day and languid to-morrow — is doomed to end in failure. It is repetition, the *iterum iterumque*, that tells. It has been well observed that a reformer may have great ideas and may blaze up on the rostrum or in the pulpit with glaring brilliancy, but his fitful, meteoric efforts will not count for any practical results.

"Every once in a while," says Rev. Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, "I am told that such and such a brilliant young man or woman has come into our congregation, and that he or she will be likely to prove a great acquisition. I confess that it is a bait at which I nibble less than I used to do. If I want a light to read by, I would rather have a good long tallow dip than a streak of lightning. A very small river will carry a

good deal of water to the sea — if it keeps running.” The faith that removes mountains is largely the faith of repetition.

Professor Blackie, of Edinburgh University, tells of a friend of his who, in ascending Ben Cruachan, found near sunset, at what he fancied was the top, that the real peak was two miles further on, and accessible only by a rough, stony ridge. Abandoning the task for that day, he on the next climbed the Ben again, and took his dinner triumphantly on the topmost top, in order, as he said, that the name of this most beautiful of the Highland Bens might not be forever associated in his mind with bafflement and defeat. William Carey, the eminent missionary, exhibited a similar persistence when a boy. In climbing a tree one day his foot slipped and he fell to the ground, whereby his leg was broken. Shut up in his bed for weeks, he had no sooner recovered than he went and climbed that tree. Who does not admire such persistent purpose? Such a man cannot be baffled in any enterprise he undertakes. When William Lloyd Garrison began publishing “The Liberator,” he announced his purpose in these memorable words: “I am in earnest; I will not equivocate; I will not excuse; I will not retreat a single inch; and I will be heard.” Heard he was, with what result the country knows. Against what storms of obloquy he accomplished his purpose may be inferred from a brief reply he made when, after the emancipation of the slaves, he was presented at a public dinner in his honor with a gold watch: “Gentlemen, if this had been a rotten egg, I should have known what to do; but as it is a gold watch, I have nothing to say.” It is said of the late Joseph E. Brown, of Georgia, who began life by

driving an ox-cart in the Cherokee Hills, hauling pine knots to peddle in Canton, and who read law after having picked up the elements of education by night study, that he was not a genius, but very slow in his mental operations. He had, though, the one great gift of persistence in a single chosen line of effort. From the bar he rose to the bench; from the bench to the governor's chair, and from that to a seat in the United States Senate.

In the fascinating field of literature indomitable pluck and persistence are prerequisites to success, without which the most brilliant abilities are doomed to defeat. The admirable *Life of Goethe*, by George Henry Lewes, one of the most accomplished writers of his day, was rejected by all the leading London publishers, and was issued at last by Mr. Nutt from motives of personal friendship. Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox states that one of her manuscripts was rejected by eight periodicals in succession, and she was about to consign it to the flames when she sent it to the ninth. A check for seventy-five dollars came to her, with a request for further similar contributions. Frankfort Moore, a journalist in Belfast, Ireland, says that he published thirty-one books for children before the literary public knew anything about him. He wrote a novel, "*I Forbid the Banns*," and took the manuscript to London, where it was "declined with thanks" by seventeen publishers. Finally, an eighteenth was found with courage to try it, and in six months the author's receipts from it amounted to five thousand dollars. James Whitcomb Riley stated recently to a correspondent of "*Success*" that a friend once came to him completely heart-broken, saying that his manuscripts, sent to periodicals for publication,

were constantly returned, and that he was the most miserable wretch alive. "I asked him how long he had been trying. 'Three years,' he said. 'My dear man,' I answered, laughing, 'go on, keep on trying till you have spent as many years at it as I did.' 'What? you—James Whitcomb Riley—struggled for years?' 'Yes, sir,—through sleepless nights, through almost hopeless days. For twenty years I tried to get into one magazine; back came my manuscripts eternally. I kept on. In the twentieth year that magazine accepted one of my articles.'"

The great "high-priest and interpreter of nature," Count Buffon, who was in youth not only to all appearance mediocre in talents, but constitutionally indolent, is a striking example of the marvels which may be achieved by steady, persistent industry. Born to a competence, he denied himself ease and pleasure, and devoted himself to self-culture. Addicted to lying late in bed, he with great difficulty, by the help of his servant, conquered the habit, but not until Joseph, finding him one morning unusually obstinate, dashed a basin of ice-cold water under his bedclothes, the effect of which was instantaneous. Working at his desk nine hours a day through a long life, he won a world-wide fame by his works, one of which, "*Epoques de la Nature*," he rewrote ten times before he was willing to give it to the world, although he had been brooding over it for nearly fifty years. The titanic and persistent energy of this truly great man, who defined genius as patience, is as wonderful as it was heroic. Doubly wonderful must we regard it when we consider that he published all of his great works while afflicted by one of the most painful of diseases.

It is a mistake to suppose that the best work in the

world is done by men or women of great strength, bodily or mental, and great opportunities. Most of the men who accomplish really great things, do it, not so much by strenuous but fitful efforts, as by steady and persevering toil. They have the genius for hard work — the most valuable kind of genius. Continual dropping wears away the rock. A very little work done daily through life at one thing achieves wondrous results. "The man who does the most within the entire circle of my acquaintance," wrote a celebrated clergyman, some years ago, "owes little to brilliant parts. He would never be singled out by young men as an object of admiration. He says very few bold, striking things — few things that stick in the memory like barbed arrows, that cannot be withdrawn. He has nothing shining or brilliant about him: but then, if you look at his doings at the close of a single year, you are astonished at what he has accomplished. Had you watched his doings all the days of the year, you would have seen a man who was never in haste, never ruffled by the numerous interruptions to which he was so liable. You would have seen him ready to listen to all, even the tedious and the fretful, and if possible to help all; and then, when he had heard all and done all that others asked, calmly and steadily returning to his toil. The fragments of time in his life are all gathered up."

Richard Arkwright — the poor illiterate barber shaving in an underground shop for half a penny, who invented the spinning machine and thus founded the factory system which has been a source of incalculable wealth to the world — owed his success to his indomitable energy and persistence, to his ability in pursuing an object *to keep at it*, in spite of the

most formidable obstacles and the bitterest opposition. Wigs — the making of which was an important part of his business — becoming unfashionable, he turned machine-inventor, and labored day and night to invent a spinning machine. These experiments, in which scores of men before him had failed, he kept up so strenuously that all his hard-earned savings were engulfed in them. Utter poverty stared him in the face, and his wife, angry at the seeming waste of time and money, destroyed his painfully made models. Compelled by the growlings of the work people — who had mobbed Kay and Hargreaves, inventors of the fly-shuttle and the spinning-jenny — to fly from Preston to Nottingham, he kept, nevertheless, steadily at his task, perfecting by long and patient labor the details of his machine even after it was finally patented. When by a combination of hostile manufacturers his patent was upset in the courts, and his mill destroyed by a mob, he kept still at his work, bating no jot of heart or hope till his final triumph.

If ever there was a man who overtopped all other mortals, ancient or modern, it was Isaac Newton; yet this transcendent genius, when asked how he had worked out his extraordinary discoveries, replied, "By always thinking unto them." At another time, he said of his method of study, "I keep the subject continually before me, and wait till the first dawns open slowly by little and little into a full and clear light." Audubon, the ornithologist, who, when his precious drawings, that had cost him years of toil, were gnawed to pieces by rats, took up his gun, his note-books, and his pencils, as soon as the burning heat which rushed through his brain at the discovery had subsided, and in three years

filled his portfolio again; Carlyle, who, when his "History of the French Revolution," wrought out by years of thought and drudging research, was used by a friend's maid-of-all-work to light the house fires with, rewrote it with a pain and anguish almost beyond belief; Ainsworth, who, when his wife indignantly burned the manuscript of the Latin dictionary which he had been long and patiently compiling, set himself again to work, and slowly and quietly rewrote it page by page; Matthew Poole, who, under similar circumstances, rewrote his elaborate "Commentary on the Bible;" Edward Livingstone, who, when his Code for Louisiana, the product of great learning and several years of deep thought and toil, perished in the flames, calmly began his work anew the next morning and persevered till its completion,—all these men were illustrious examples of that tenacity of purpose which keeps at a task under the most disheartening circumstances, and which only death can overcome.

No man in the nineteenth century left a more distinct impression of himself on his generation, wrought a greater revolution in the thought of his time, than the invalid, Charles Darwin. He accomplished his great work *non vi, sed saepe cadendo*, — not by long spells of labor, but by doing the little at a time which his poor health would allow, day by day, to the end of his life. Faithful to his one task, he put into it every ounce of his force and every hour of his available time. "He never scattered his energy; he never wasted an hour; and by steadily keeping at it, in spite of continual ill health and long intervals of semi-invalidism, he did a great work, and has left upon the world the impression of a man of extraordinary energy and working capacity."

Michael Angelo was an indefatigable worker, — sometimes he kept at his task so late that, too tired to undress, he slept in his clothes, ready to spring at it again as soon as refreshed by sleep. Titian, who worked on one of his pictures almost daily for seven years, toiled with the brush till he was ninety. Sir David Wilkie attributed his success as a painter to his dogged perseverance, rather than to any natural gift or innate power. Not one of his felicitous pictures was struck off at a heat; many of them, which occupied him for years, he touched, retouched, and improved, till they passed out of his hands. Not less slowly and conscientiously were Calcott's famous pictures elaborated. In the composition of his "Rochester," he made not fewer than forty separate sketches. In short there is no calling in which great success has been achieved except by persistence, — by hard work persevered in through a long series of years; and the man who will not pay that price for excellence or distinction had better at once, as Sydney Smith says, "dedicate himself to the pursuit of the fox, or sport with the tangles of Neaera's hair, or talk of bullocks, and glory in the goad! There are many modes of being frivolous, and not a few of being useful; there is but one mode of being intellectually great."

Over the door of a very old house in the West Bow of Edinburgh, Scotland, there is, or was, not many years ago, the significant inscription, "HE THAT THOLES OVERCOMES." What motive prompted the man who built the house [he was probably a burgher in the sixteenth century] to inscribe his dwelling thus, — whether the acquisition of the means for building it was the result of extraordinary persistence and endurance amid baffling discouragements, — is

not known ; but the maxim is one that must often have impressed itself on the minds of the passers-by. "He that tholes" — that is, he who endures without flinching — "overcomes." He who, however harassed and buffeted, however sorely tried by "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," bears his trials patiently and with manly fortitude, triumphs at last.

No man, by the utmost prudence, can escape all disasters. Without any fault of his own, a man's shrewdest plans may be defeated, his fondest hopes blighted. Beings as dear to him as life itself may be torn from him by death, the slow accumulations of years may be swept away by a sudden panic in the money-market, or he may be tortured by one of those mysterious diseases which medical science can only view with despair. But even these evils may be alleviated by fortitude and patience. There is no ill, save remorse, for which there is not some palliative, and no one which may not be aggravated by whining over it. Of most of the trials of life it may be said, as of the dangers of the battlefield, that they are less fatal to the men who stand firm than to those who give way, — the cowards being always cut down ingloriously in the fight.

Young men who are beginning a professional or business career need especially to learn the wisdom of tholing. Too many start in life with an exaggerated opinion of their own abilities ; and, if they do not find all obstacles giving way at once on their approach, lose heart, and sink into sloth, indecision, or despair. Because the portals of prosperity do not instantly fly open at their "Open Sesame," — because they find that Fortune does not immediately reward their attentions, but must be wooed with a persistence

and solicitude proportioned to the value of her favors, — they hastily distrust the abilities which they had unwisely overrated, and fancy them inadequate to the tasks they had set for them. Such persons need to be told that it is not brilliancy or dash which is required for the world's most useful work, but the ability to work on and on, and still on, in spite of discouragement. It is not the impetuosity with which one attacks his tasks that is the measure of his power, but the doggedness with which he holds on after he has been defeated.

It is not by "fits and starts" of application, however furious, that eminence in any calling is to be won. It is only by regular and unceasing attention, by deep and intense study of the elementary principles of his art or calling, by contemplation of good examples, by sacrificing every comfort that menaces his progress, and by shunning the Dead Sea of idleness and pleasure, that the youth can achieve a signal success in life. "Patient continuance in well-doing" is the vital quality that is needed. Let the aspirant hold on, — thole, — and, as other persons die who now hold important positions, vacancies will occur, some one of which he may be called to fill. At the worst, he will be gradually accumulating, if not worldly pelf, invaluable knowledge for future use, and — what is always needful in a professional career — making himself known by merely standing on the cabstands of his calling. The poet Wordsworth, who attained to the highest eminence in his art, in spite of the sneers of critics, by patient tholing, gives in his "Excursion," as a reason for continuing a mountain perambulation when the sky began to look cloudy, that, although a little rain might be disagreeable to

the skin, yet the act of giving up a fixed purpose, in view of a slight possible inconvenience, is dangerous to the character.

There are nations, as well as individuals, that achieve success by tholing. England is a striking example. In the war of the giants waged by her and Napoleon, she wearied out and defeated her mighty foe by her stubborn pertinacity, rather than by any brilliancy in her military conceptions or operations. The battle of Toulouse, where Soult made his last stand against Wellington, and the final decisive battle of Waterloo, where Napoleon made his last stand against the Allies, ending in his utter overthrow, were both proofs of the superiority of dogged determination to impetuosity and dash, however brilliant. One after another, all the great military powers of Europe, that placed their reliance on drill, discipline, and military skill, went down before the iron flail of "the child of destiny" like ninepins. The men whom Pelissier, the French commander in the Crimean War, ridiculed as "mere children in the art of combination," were the only men who made head against the greatest master of the art of combination the world ever saw.

Our forefathers, in the deadly struggle of the Revolution, won their independence by tholing. For years they lost most of the battles they fought. New York, Philadelphia, and South Carolina were held in the grasp of the foe; New Jersey was virtually annexed to England; and disaster after disaster befell "the rebels" on every hand. Had the American people lost heart; had they rebelled against the sufferings at Valley Forge, or quailed at the ice in the Delaware, or shrunk from the storm-beaten march on

Trenton, they would never have won their independence as a nation. But they resolved to win or die. Though overwhelmed with financial disaster, though their cities were taken, their fields desolated, and their captured soldiers imprisoned in foul prison ships, though they had to make the pilgrimage of freedom with naked feet that bled at every step, — they still continued to thole. For seven weary, dreary years they maintained the unequal struggle with Britons, Hessians, and Indians, till, at length, by their dogged tenacity of purpose, they wearied out their foe and won their independence.

How often has the calm, laborious, persistent spirit of the world's great workers brought the blushes of shame to our cheek! Let the young man who is striving to make the most of his powers keep their examples ever before his eyes! They will rouse and stimulate him, when tempted to relax his efforts and indulge in idleness and ease, to press on to the goal of his ambition, and do what he can in this swiftly passing life of ours.

CHAPTER XIV

A TALENT FOR WORK

"Do thy little stroke of work. . . . This is the sum of all the commandments. . . . Produce! produce! Were it but the pitifullest fraction of a product, produce it, in God's name." — CARLYLE.

IT is a common mistake to suppose that intellectual cleverness or mental power is the main qualification for success in any career. Far more important than brilliant abilities is a talent for work, — for hard, persistent, unremitting toil. Mental cleverness is the edge of the knife which makes it penetrate; but whether it penetrate deeply or not depends more on the force applied to it and the persistence with which it is applied than upon the sharpness of the blade. The will is the driving-wheel which sets all the mental machinery in motion. It is the man who not only resolves to succeed, but who begins and rebegins resolutely again and again after every rebuff, that reaches the goal. Take any calling or sphere of achievement, — as literature, for example, a calling in which success would seem to depend chiefly upon intuition or inspiration, what men call "genius," — and what an amount of toil — of hard, unremitting, exhausting work, nay, even of drudgery — success in it exacts!

A poem like Gray's "Elegy" or Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" or Pope's "Epistle to Doctor Arbuthnot" is not struck off at a flash. The most fastidious

and exacting taste has been at work upon it for weeks and months, and perhaps for years — blotting, expanding, condensing, and polishing with ceaseless care; and it is not till after innumerable changes, blots, and erasures, that this quintessence of thoughts which have been refined in the crucible is at last given to the world, its different parts fused together and finished with all the care of a skilled jeweler setting his most precious gems. The same thing is true of a great historical work like Gibbon's or Macaulay's. It involves an amount of labor and positive drudgery of which the reader who glides so easily over its pages has no conception. To produce a sterling history which shall abide the closest critical scrutiny the writer must go back to the original sources of information, to the statutes of the period he is portraying, the diplomatic correspondence, the orders and reports of military leaders, the records of debates in councils and parliaments, political pamphlets, street ballads and "broadsides," ships' log-books, contemporary memoirs, private diaries and letters, newspapers — even, in some cases, to old worm-eaten account-books and musty files of receipts. He must scrutinize piles of papers in foreign languages, or in the strange spelling and handwriting of centuries long past — in faded ink, too, and on browned parchments; and days and even weeks of toil must sometimes be undergone in preparing to write a single page.

It is customary to explain the highest results of human effort — the achievements that immortalize men — by attributing them to a subtle, mysterious power which no one has been able to define, yclept "genius." It is thought to vulgarize a great work to

ascribe it to anything but direct inspiration from heaven. Men are led into this error by contemplating the magnitude of a work—as, for example, Newton's "Principia," or Milton's "Paradise Lost," or a great invention—in its finished state, without considering the slow, gradual, creeping progress by which these things have been brought to their perfection. Unable to trace the weary steps by which the philosopher, poet, or inventor has passed, in spite of many defeats and discouragements, from one mountain peak of thought to another, "thinking while others slept, reading while others rioted," till he has attained to his present lofty elevation, they cry out that he is "a miracle of genius!" "Yes," says Sydney Smith, "he is a miracle of genius, because he is a miracle of labor; because, instead of trusting to the resources of his own single mind, he has ransacked a thousand minds; because he makes use of the accumulated wisdom of ages, and takes as his point of departure the very last line and boundary to which science has advanced; because it has ever been the object of his life to assist every intellectual gift of Nature, however munificent and however splendid, with every resource that art could suggest and every attention that diligence could bestow."

What can be more ridiculous than the ideas which have prevailed in the world concerning genius? The old idea, current for ages, was that a man of genius is one who never toils, or toils at odd times, without regularity or method, and startles the world at long intervals by some marvelous product. He is an idle, capricious, vagabond person, who hates all order and scouts all restraint; who lives a dreamy and generally idle life, full of moods, oddities, and eccentricities,

and who is indebted for his conceptions and their embodiment in a picture, a statue, or a poem to a divine afflatus or inspiration. How often has it been said of a young man, that "he has genius enough, if he would only study!" To-day this notion still lingers in ignorant minds; but in all others it has been exploded. We now know that capacity and love for work are the very essence, the soul, of genius, and that to talk of a genius that will not work — that loves not to create — is as absurd as to talk of fire that will not burn, or of lazy lightning. It is true that men have different degrees of aptitude for a particular pursuit; but all history shows that the superiority of genius is not only a superiority of natural endowment, but a force of will and a faculty of toil — of intense, protracted toil — that bring all the natural endowments into the highest and most effective activity. Slowly and painfully did Milton elaborate verse after verse of his sublime epic; and Newton left on record the assurance that he did not discover the law of gravitation by the aid of heaven-born inspiration, but by dint of a homely virtue within the reach of all men, the habit of patient thought.

The secret toil undergone by great artists, authors, and scholars is amazing, or would be so did we not know that they regard it as the price of all excellence. "No man," says the painter Inness, "can do anything in art unless he has intuitions; but between whiles he must work hard in collecting the materials out of which intuitions are made." All great artists understand this, and act upon it accordingly.

Claude Lorraine sat for whole days watching the effects of sunlight, — the color of the skies, the trees, the grass, and the water, — that he might recombine

the picturesque materials thus gathered together, and idealize them by his exquisite imagination. Leonardo da Vinci would walk the whole length of Milan to alter a single line in his great painting, "The Last Supper." The works of Mendelssohn testify to an almost unparalleled industry. At home or traveling, at all times and in all places, he was engaged in the conception or in the development of musical ideas. When a woman asked Turner, the great English painter, what was the secret of his mastery, he replied, "Madam, I have no secret but hard work." The best kind of genius is just this of Turner, the genius for hard work, for high and long-continued effort, — genius of that great and magnanimous kind which, as Wirt says, pitches from the summit of Chimborazo, above the clouds, and sustains itself in that empyrean region with an energy rather invigorated than weakened by the effort. Indeed, so far is genius from dispensing with the necessity of labor that it has even been defined as a prodigious capacity for hard work. Hazlitt goes so far as to say that men of genius do not excel in any profession because they labor in it, but they labor in it because they excel. We believe that both of these opinions are correct.

Hume, when writing his "History of England," toiled for thirteen hours a day. If any man was ever endowed with genius, Burke was; yet, or rather therefore, he was one of the most laborious of human beings. Leibnitz rarely left his library; Cicero and Pascal nearly killed themselves by hard study; Milton, who mastered nearly all the knowledge of his time, tells us that from the twelfth year of his life he scarcely ever went from his lessons to his bed before midnight. When Dickens had given nearly five hun-

dred public readings, he never attempted a new part in public until he had spent two or three months over it, in study as searching and faithful as that which Rachel or Cushman would give to a new character. This study extended not merely to the analysis of the text, the discrimination of character, and the pettiest points of elocution, but also to the facial expression, the tone of the voice, the gesture, the attitude, and even the material surroundings; and his bodily exhaustion after a night's reading was always great.

It was said of the late lamented Empress of Austria, who was slain by an anarchist, that her reading was omnivorous. She read and spoke all the modern European languages; and in 1889, when she was past fifty years old, learned Greek, to add to the pleasure of her life in Corfu. Her tutor, who was a Greek, said, "The rapidity with which my imperial pupil mastered the difficulties of modern Greek astounded me, and the phenomenon appeared intelligible to me only when I discovered that it was the result of an iron will, before which all obstacles are swept away, combined with a feeling of strong sympathy for the Greek people. Besides her own reading, which was extensive, her majesty appeared punctually at the hour fixed for the lesson, never missing one, not even when the steamer was on its way to Tunis or Malta. . . . Married when only sixteen, she acquired all that instruction which won for her the reputation of being a woman of rare accomplishments and learning, after she had become an empress." What an example to women of every land!

What rare endowments of eye and hand had Michael Angelo! Yet neither he nor the many-sided Leonardo da Vinci thought any detail of anatomy or

physics beneath his notice. They studied the human frame as if they expected to be doctors, the laws of matter as if they meant to be engineers, the nature of light as if they meant to be physicists, and the principles of optics as if they had resolved to be astronomers. They toiled early and late over local color and perspective and the chemistry of pigments; they perfected themselves ceaselessly upon models and drapery, upon architecture and landscape. Angelo was so laborious that he used occasionally at night to throw himself upon his bed in his working clothes. When reproached for leading a solitary and melancholy life, he replied, "Art is a jealous mistress, and requires the whole man."

All the great statesmen, scholars, orators, and writers of ancient and modern times have had a marvelous talent for work. "I know that he can toil terribly," said Queen Elizabeth of Raleigh, and the same might be said of the chiefs in almost every calling. John Hunter said of himself that his mind was like a beehive, "full of buzz and seeming confusion, but full of order and of food collected with incessant industry from the choicest stores of nature." Edison is a prodigious worker, who affirms that for twenty-one years he worked nineteen hours a day, so that at forty-seven he was really eighty-two years old.

In all the departments of art, in musical composition, in vocal and instrumental music, in sculpture and painting, such enormous painstaking is essential to success that energy in the devotee is vital. Without it what student can endure the iteration of the same monotonous exercises, the never-ending training of hand, of ear, of eye, which is requisite to make all the faculties of body and mind subservient to the

purposes of his art? What violinist ever had a more extraordinary genius or aptitude for his art than Paganini? He, if anybody, might have been excused from a drudging application to his art; yet how ceaselessly and painfully he toiled to get a perfect mastery of it! When Europe was ringing with his name, he would for ten or twelve hours together try passages over and over again in different ways with his violin, with such absorption and intensity that at nightfall he would sink into utter prostration through prolonged fatigue and exhaustion. At the very time in his career when every new exploit he achieved was greeted by his audiences with frantic applause, he betook himself to an exhaustive study of the old masters. Handel, the king of oratorio music, was a composer of prodigious force and impetuosity. So volcanic was his energy that at times the mechanical power of his hand could not keep pace with the torrent of ideas which flowed from his brain. "When he chooses," said Mozart, "Handel strikes like the thunderbolt." Auber, the composer, who heard Rossini play on the piano at a nobleman's house, wrote: "I shall never forget the sensation produced by his lightning-like execution. When he had finished, I looked mechanically at the ivory keys; I fancied I could see them smoking."

That energy, fire, spirit, is indispensable to success on the stage is notorious. The great actors have owed their success less to their dramatic genius than to their unwearied painstaking, and the force and spirit which they have thrown into their personations. Salvini spent years in mastering a single part. The excellence of Booth's personations was evidently not the result of natural gifts, so much as of his ceaseless

painstaking efforts to perfect himself in his art. He was no exception to the rule —

“That things of greatest, as of meanest, worth
Conceived with grief are, and with tears brought forth.”

Acting, as the great tragedian Talma once said, is a complete paradox. “The skillful actor calculates his effects beforehand. He never improvises a burst of passion or an explosion of grief. Everything he does is the result of prearrangement and forethought. The agony that appears instantaneous, the joy that seems to gush forth involuntarily, the tone of the voice, the gesture, the look, which pass for sudden inspiration, have been rehearsed a hundred times.”

All the great statesmen of Europe and America have been great workers. Many of the leading legislators of Great Britain have been lawyers, who have not only been overwhelmed with business, but have also served their country in Parliament, — rising before the break of day, spending many weary hours in study and in pleading, and completing twenty-four hours of almost ceaseless toil in the House of Commons. What a Titanic and tireless worker was Gladstone, alike in boyhood, middle life, and old age, when at eighty-four he sometimes read and studied ten hours a day! It was this talent and love for work which made his fellow-student at Oxford, the brilliant Arthur Hallam, the subject of Tennyson’s “In Memoriam,” predict: “Whatever may be our lot, I am confident that Gladstone is a bud that will bloom with a richer fragrance than almost any whose youthful promise I have witnessed.”

Macaulay was an extraordinary worker, and when toiling at his history in 1848 he rose at daybreak and wrought intensely, sometimes sitting at his desk

twelve hours on a stretch. "I have made myself what I am," said that giant of classical erudition, Porson, "by intense labor." What made Bulwer, who composed at first with great difficulty, so successful at last, not only as a novelist, but as an essayist, dramatist, historian, poet, orator, and political pamphleteer? It was a Herculean faculty of work, which manifested itself, in spite of his lifelong invalidism, in not less than a hundred volumes, though he lived but sixty-eight years. Who needs to be told of that glutton of work, Brougham, whose faculties rested themselves only like sailors on a watch, by turns; of Walter Scott, rising to work daily at five o'clock in the morning, and "breaking the backbone of the day," as he used to say, before his family had assembled for breakfast; or of Arnold of Rugby, always up to his ears in work, learning some new language, studying some fresh historical subject, or cheering on by his pen some progressive movement of the age? All these men were superior to other men simply because they took more pains than other men.

Some persons who have no clear ideas of what true energy is, imagine that it is destructive to the nerves, exhaustive of the animal spirits. But the truth is, the exhaustion, or wear and tear, that comes from an active day will not compare for a moment with that which follows an indolent one. There are other persons who, like Fuseli, the painter, confound energy with violence. Conscious of not having all the strength he wished, he endeavored to make up for it by violence and pretension. He carried this so far, Leigh Hunt says, as to look fiercer than usual when he sat for his portrait. His notion of repose was like that of Pistol, —

“Now, Pistol, lay thy head in Furies’ lap.”

But violence is not necessary to energy any more than tyranny is to kingship. On the contrary, as the author of “Self-Formation” finely observes, “it is the gentlest energy that does the most work. Energy literally, from the Greek, is *inward-workingness*. The blooming of the flower is energy, the increase of fruit is energy, the growth of the body is energy; yet in all these there is no violence. The efficacy is not destructive, but vital; without it, the whole frame must fall at once into corruption; with it, instead of corruption, we have life.”

Let us be thankful, then, however low our birth or however moderate apparently our abilities, if we have a talent for work, and whatever our task, buckle to it with energy and content.

CHAPTER XV

THE FORMATION OF HABITS

"Habit and imitation are the source of all working and all apprenticeship, of all practice and all learning, in this world." — CARLYLE.

"The chains of habit are too small to be felt, till they are too strong to be broken." — DR. JOHNSON.

ONE of the most important facts in human nature, and one which more, perhaps, than any other, merits the thoughtful consideration of young men and women, is that strange, occult power which we call habit; that mysterious tendency, or proneness to the repetition of acts which we have a few times performed. "Habit," says Carlyle, "is the deepest law of human nature." "Life," says Amiel, "is but a tissue of habits." We come into the world a bunch of sensibilities, and suddenly, before we are conscious of it, we have become a bundle of iron habits. These habits are easily assumed; but stripping them off is like being flayed alive. They act involuntarily, without effort, and though they may seem at first to have no more strength than a spider's web, yet once formed, they bind us with chains of steel. Like snow, which falls flake by flake, our petty, thoughtless acts, regarded singly, may seem of little importance; yet, accumulated, they form a power as resistless as the avalanche.

The rapidity with which habits grow, even while we are talking about them, — "grow by unseen de-

greets, as brooks make rivers, rivers run to the sea," — and close round us like the ices from the opposite shores of the Arctic Sea, is as certain as it is incomprehensible. A myriad of subtle influences are perpetually at work upon us, invisibly moulding and shaping us; yet they leave their impress as truly as the sculptor leaves the work of his chisel upon the marble. By the frequent repetition of certain acts man becomes a slave to them, a machine committed forever to a predetermined mode of thought and action. In vain does the enfeebled will remonstrate; in spite of its protests, the trained nerves continue to repeat the acts even when the doer abhors them.

In Jefferson's play, Rip Van Winkle after he had "sworn off," said at every invitation to drink, "Well, this time does n't count." "True," says Professor James, "he may not have counted it, as thousands of others have not counted it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing that we ever do is, in strict literalness, wiped out. There is a tendency in the nervous system to repeat the same mode of action at regularly recurring intervals." Dr. Combe says that all nervous diseases have a marked tendency to observe regular periods. "If we repeat any kind of mental effort at the same hour daily, we at length find ourselves entering upon it without premeditation when the time approaches. . . . The great thing in all education is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy. It is to fund and capitalize our acquisition, and live at ease upon the interest of the fund. For this we must make

automatic and habitual, as soon as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and guard against growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us, as we would guard against the plague."

The snuff-taker begins with a pinch a day, and ends with a pound or more every month. Swearing begins with an angry, half-involuntary exclamation; it ends by interlarding the ordinary conversation with oaths. A curious circumstance is that the tendency to do a certain thing steadily increases, even when, owing to the blunted sensibility of the organ, the pleasure resulting from the act is diminished. The desire is irresistible, though there be no gratification at all. Thus in Fielding's "Jonathan Wild" there is a scene where he is represented as playing at cards with the Count, a professed gambler. "Such," says the novelist, "was the power of habit over the lives of these illustrious persons, that Mr. Wild could not keep his hands out of the Count's pockets, though he knew that they were empty; nor could the Count abstain from palming a card, though he was well aware that Mr. Wild had no money to pay him." Horace Walpole tells a story of some gamblers at White's gaming rooms, in London, which strikingly shows the tyranny of habit. One of the players fell at the table in a fit of apoplexy, and his companions immediately began to bet upon his chances of recovery. When the physician came, they refused to let him bleed the man, "because it would affect the bet." When President Garfield was hanging between life and death and the nation was in breathless suspense, gamblers bet heavily on the issue, and even sold pools.

"Would you know," says Sydney Smith, "who is

the most degraded and the most wretched of human beings, — how deep the misery of man can reach? Then look for a man who has practiced a vice so long that he curses yet clings to it, — pursues it because he feels a great law of his nature driving him on to it; yet, reaching it, feels that it will gnaw at his heart, and tear his vitals, and make him roll himself in the dust with anguish.”

While habit has its gloomy side, it has also its bright side, and may be made our good angel as well as our deadly foe. While it holds in its unseen grasp fearful possibilities of evil; while it is certain that some of the finest, brightest natures have yielded to its baleful sway, as the opium of Coleridge and De Quincey and the “wet damnation” of Poe too plainly attest; while, as another has said, on every hand are the bleaching bones of the victims of this demon who first clutches the soul and then destroys it, it is yet a reassuring reflection that this same power may be harnessed to work for a man as well as against him.

Habit enables us to do a vast number of actions, a prodigious amount of work, automatically; that is, with the minimum of attention and the smallest expenditure of nervous force. It gives to human action a strength, surety, and swiftness that seem unattainable by any other means, and the longer it continues the greater are its effects. It may be truly said that practically all the great achievements of the human race are the results of habit. Education, discipline, all effectual training, consists in making habitual as many good actions as possible. Every time that we form a good association and send it down into the region of the unconscious, we practice mental economy. The one thing for which we all, but especially the

young, should most earnestly and persistently strive, is "to make our nervous system our ally," instead of suffering it to become our enemy. This is "to fund and capitalize our acquisition, and live at ease upon the interest of the fund."

Good habits, habits of industry, conscientiousness, thoroughness, method, accuracy, and punctuality, once formed by a young man, are a fortune of themselves. Inwrought in the very fibre of his being, they become a part of himself, and insure his success as no outward help can possibly do. On the other hand, bad habits, though quickly acquired, hang forever on the wheels of enterprise, and obstruct and defeat all progress, to the ruin and shame of their victim.

CHAPTER XVI

THE VALUE OF PATIENCE

"Patience and struggle; an earnest use of what we have now, and all the time an earnest discontent until we come to what we ought to be — are not those what we need?" — PHILLIPS BROOKS.

"How poor are they that have not patience!" — SHAKESPEARE.

"Patient preparation is permanent power."

IT is said that when the question was once discussed in the presence of William Pitt, "What is the quality most needed by a prime minister?" one of the speakers said that it is eloquence; another, that it is knowledge; and a third, that it is toil. "No," said Pitt, "it is patience." The more we reflect upon the subject, the more truth we shall see in this reply. The secret of success, not only in politics, but in business, at the bar, in medical practice, in the ministry, in every sphere of effort, is not in brilliancy of talents, in promptitude of action, not even in energy, essential as that is, but in willingness to bide one's time. Time is an important element in all solid achievement. No important voyage can be made with one wind. The fruits that are best worth plucking ripen slowly; and, therefore, the man who would win a lasting success must learn both "to labor and *to wait*." He must put his faith, not in brilliant genius, in tricks and devices, or in luck, but in regular, measured, persistent effort, — unvarying and never failing, not necessarily slow, but never made at a faster rate than can be maintained to the end, reminding

you of the steady, never accelerated movement of a great engine's eccentric beam. Partial successes, instead of tempting him to relax his struggles in the race of life, should only stimulate him to redouble his efforts. The shouts of the spectators, as he passes one milestone after another, instead of cheating him with the expectation that he is sure of the prize, should have no other effect than to urge him on with ceaseless, unhurrying, unintermitting effort, over the road that lies between him and the goal.

Of all the lessons which the beginner in life has to learn in the school of the world, the hardest is — to wait. Not to wait with folded hands that claim life's prizes without effort, but, having toiled and struggled, and crowded the slow, weary years with trial, to see then no results, or worse still, disastrous ones, and yet to stand, to keep one's poise, to buckle again and yet again with all one's might to the task, — this is true heroism. This was the heroism, the almost divine patience which Cyrus Field showed, when, during ten years of defeat, in spite of croakings and prophecies of failure, he clung to his purpose of laying the Atlantic cable from Europe to America, crossing and recrossing the stormy Atlantic nearly fifty times. The cable snapped in mid-ocean, and when, with great labor, it was brought to the surface, it slipped away like a great eel. It was not till the electric wire was lowered the thirtieth time that the tireless patience of the projector was rewarded. Such a patience is not inborn. It is a product of head winds and hard fights, — a thing of effort and principle, not of temperament, — and is found only in those who, in their efforts at self-improvement, are willing to —

“Wait beneath the furnace blast
The pains of transformation.”

It is the quick, ready, keen-witted man who is most likely to be wanting in the virtue we have commended. Excess of rapidity means defect of patience, and want of patience is the most constant secret of a man's stopping short at half-genius. Want of patience is sometimes confounded with want of industry, when, in fact, the most industrious of men are often found to be the most impetuous. All men of over-active brain and over-tasked energies are certain to be impatient. They are especially intolerant of all steps and processes. They cannot endure gradual, step-by-step advances, — the spaces that inevitably occur between the beginning and the end of every transaction. Impatient, ceaseless industry has, therefore, been justly characterized as one of the most dangerous qualities a man can have. His impatience drives him to scamp his work, or to do it in such a way that he has to unravel as much as he weaves, to pull down with one hand as much as he piles up with the other.

No quality more incapacitates a man for leadership than impatience. It is impossible for a man to succeed in this who wants always to leap to the goal; who rebels against those step-by-step advances, those spaces that inevitably occur between the beginning and the end of every transaction. It is doubtful if a constitutionally impatient man, who has never corrected his infirmity, ever gets to the bottom of things, or knows with any accuracy or thoroughness the standing, quality, and disposition of the persons among whom he is thrown. A man's whole nature is not to be learned at a glance; it can be apprehended only gradually and by repeated observation; and therefore no impatient person can have any real know-

ledge of character. Nor can such a person be a just critic, or understand the merits of a knotty question, or make himself master of any difficult situation. The power of waiting, deliberating, hanging in suspense, — of staving off for a considerable time all personal leanings, — is necessary for all these, and that power he lacks.

Patience is as necessary to nations as to individuals. It is because of this lack of patience under calamity that all the French wars with England have ended unfortunately for France. The long and bloody conflict between William III. and Louis XIV. was marked by no signal triumphs of the English, but it was organized and protracted by British money and persistence. The “asthmatic skeleton” who disputed, sword in hand, the bloody field of Landen, succeeded at last, without winning a single great victory, in destroying the prestige of his antagonist, exhausting his resources, and sowing the seeds of his final ruin, simply by the superiority of British patience and perseverance. So, too, in the “war of giants” waged with Napoleon, when all the great military powers of the Continent were overwhelmed in rapid succession by this master of the art of war, England wearied him out by her pertinacity, rather than by the brilliancy of her operations, triumphing by sheer dogged determination over the greatest master of combination the world ever saw.

It has been asserted by a recent writer that all people have their impatient side, — that nobody is patient through every test. Many persons who are patient with others lack patience with themselves. Many who confront calmly and overcome triumphantly outward obstacles and difficulties, fail in this

last kind of patience, which is far harder to acquire, and is demanded at every step in life. "Many a man," says an essayist in the "Outlook," "who watches himself courageously and persistently, and with perfect equanimity against external foes, feels constantly depressed and discouraged when he faces his own nature, and recognizes the constant return of faults and weaknesses and evil tendencies which he hoped he had overcome. No other problem of our moral life demands for its solution such infinite patience and persistence. If the secrets of all hearts were revealed, it would be found that hosts of men give up the struggle with themselves because they have not sufficient patience with themselves. They become disheartened by their failure to subdue obvious faults and to cast out evil tendencies. It is the broken resolution, the deserted position, the infidelity to a clearly defined purpose, the unexpected return of the old temptation in its old force, that takes the life and courage out of a great many men. It seems as if no progress were being made, as if the battle were an endless round, without issue and without decision. And as there is no struggle so severe and exacting as that which a man has to make with himself, so there is no victory so noble as that which a man wins over himself; for the fact of struggle carries with it the possibility of victory. The spider, reweaving his shattered web for the twentieth time, followed an instinct which those who believe in the presence of God in the world believe to be divine. The man who rebuilds for the hundredth time his shattered purpose, and reburnishes his tarnished ideal, obeys an instinct from God, and may count on God's help, in so far as his struggle is a sincere one."

“To know how to wait,” says De Maistre, “is the secret of success.” “He that can have patience,” says the shrewd, practical Franklin, “can have what he will.” “There is no road too long,” says that keen observer of men, La Bruyère, “to the man who advances deliberately and without undue haste; there are no honors too distant to the man who prepares himself for them with patience.” Although this virtue is too generally regarded as a “slow” one, especially by “Young America,” in this fiery and impatient age, when, as Longfellow complains, we seem to live in the midst of a battle, there is such a din, such a hurrying to and fro, yet William Pitt combined that virtue, as did Wellington, Washington, Grant, and hundreds of other great men, with extraordinary readiness, vigor, and quickness of thought and action; and a friend of the Emperor Frederick William of Germany, who was rapid enough both in the council and on the field of battle, said of him, “The great point I have always admired in him is his power to wait patiently.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE VALUE OF READINESS

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." — LUKE xii. 35.

ONE of the happiest sayings of that half-forgotten humorist, Artemus Ward, is his reply when asked to make an after-dinner speech: "I have the gift of oratory, but I have n't it just now with me." This is not merely a fine sally of humor, a surface jest, but the expression of a very general experience. How often an opportunity occurs to a young lawyer or other professional man to make a reputation by a single speech, or other intellectual effort, if he were only ready! If he could have a little time for preparation, a day or two, or a few hours even, he would electrify his hearers. But time, except in the rarest cases, never is given; and because he cannot act now, at the very crisis, he loses the golden opportunity forever.

Of all mental gifts or acquirements, is there one more enviable, one that seems more miraculous in its effects, especially to those that lack it, than readiness? The world's estimate of this quality is seen in its extravagant praise of "impromptu" speeches, so called, not one in a hundred, or even a thousand, of which, if really weighted with ideas or brilliant in language and illustration, is made without preparation. By readiness we mean, as we have said in a previous chap-

ter, the power, possessed by so few men, of calling up and concentrating all one's faculties on any matter at a moment's notice. In every calling, in war and in politics, in the ministry, at the bar, in medicine, in journalism, and even in the social circle, it is indispensable to high success. There are two moments, says Browning, in a diver's life: —

“One when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge;
One when, a prince, he rises with his pearl;”

and, in like manner, there are crises in almost every man's life, the taking advantage of which or their neglect may make or mar his fortune. There are hours when the Rubicon must be passed, when the Wellington of the battlefield, the mart, or the forum must not wait for Blucher to come up, but must himself arise and charge.

In war readiness is vitally necessary, essential to all success. Victories and defeats often turn on minutes. Opportunities come, the seizing of which is triumph, the neglect of which is ruin. Julius Cæsar, that “horrible monster of celerity and vigilance,” as Cicero calls him, was a marvel of readiness. Prepared for every emergency, he won his battles by the almost incredible swiftness of his movements, and seldom in his marches came to a place but his coming was before the report of it. Does he, when landing on the English coast, stumble and fall on the sands? Instantly he covers his mischance, and hides the evil omen from his followers by grasping the very sand which threw him, and, holding it aloft, with heroic utterance turns his threatened defeat into a shout of triumph. Once, and once only, did Cæsar delay, and that delay cost him his life. It was when, from

the necessity of replying to the constant salutes that greeted him on his way to the Roman Senate, he deferred reading the message put into his hands warning him of the conspiracy of Brutus and Cassius.

Readiness was a quality most conspicuous in the military character of Constantine the Great. When Maxentius seized the throne of the Roman Empire, it was the celerity of Constantine, who, on the first news of his perfidy, marched rapidly against him from the Rhine to the Saône and Rhone, and overcame him at Marseilles, that defeated all his hopes. It was the same quality which was most conspicuous in the overthrow of Maxentius, anticipating whose invasion of Gaul, Constantine swiftly crossed the Alps, stormed the fortified city of Susa at the foot of Mount Cenis, defeated Maxentius in three hotly contested battles, and achieved the most splendid enterprise of his life. Again, in the successive brilliant victories won under many disadvantages over Licinius, the Emperor of the East, and which made Constantine master of the whole Roman Empire, it was his constant readiness, decision, and swiftness of movement, seconded by the intrepid spirit which he infused into all his soldiers, which insured his success. His nephew, Julian, "the Apostate," also achieved his victories as much by his readiness, *élan*, and celerity as by his skill and valor. When, during his service as Constantine's lieutenant in Gaul, he assumed the imperial purple, and resolved to wrest the sceptre of the Roman Empire from his chief, he entered at once upon the execution of his daring enterprise, — plunged with his soldiers into the recesses of the Black Forest, where, for many days, he was lost to the world, — forced his way over rivers, mountains, and morasses,

sailed seven hundred miles down the Danube, and disembarked his troops at Bononia, near Sirmium, before his enemies could learn with certainty that he had left the banks of the Rhine.

Napoleon was preëminently a ready man. No man better knew the danger of delays in war. His mind acted like the lightning, and never with more promptness and precision than in moments of confusion, danger, or disaster. He used to say that one of the principal requisites of a general is an accurate calculation of time; for, if your adversary can bring a powerful force to attack a certain post ten minutes sooner than you can bring up a sufficient supporting force, you are beaten, though all the rest of your plans be the most perfect that can be devised. Every moment lost is an opportunity for misfortune. A memorable instance of this great captain's celerity was when, in 1805, sweeping suddenly, with a large and well-appointed army from Boulogne to the Rhine and through the Black Forest, he took the Austrians by surprise at Ulm, and nearly finished his campaign by a single sudden blow. A striking antithesis in this respect to the victor of Austerlitz was General McClellan in our civil war, who was always getting ready, rarely ready to fight. As Voltaire said of La Harpe, he was like an oven that is always heating up, but never cooking anything. Had he not been sadly lacking in the most important quality of a great commander, he would not, with twenty thousand reserve troops that had not fired a gun, have suffered Lee to escape across the Potomac after the battle of Antietam. It was a characteristic saying of Napoleon that "two armies are two bodies which meet and try to frighten each other. A moment of panic occurs,

and *that* moment must be turned to advantage." Nelson, England's great naval hero, said that all his successes in life were due to his having been always a quarter of an hour before his time. To achieve any signal success in the world we must be *semper parati*, "always prepared," with our wits at instant command. We must be able to act as quickly and wisely in an emergency as did that doughty and veracious hero, Baron Munchausen, when threatened at the same moment by a crocodile and a tiger. He got rid of both of his assailants by simply springing aside and letting the tiger jump down the crocodile's throat.

To be ready is to have the mind's intellectual property put out at fifty or a hundred per cent.; to be unready is to creep where others fly, to be outstripped in life's race, to have all one's gifts practically neutralized, to be dimly conscious of faculties somewhere tied up in a napkin. In professional life readiness is vitally necessary. To be ready there is vitally important to him who would make his ability, tact, and knowledge tell. To be unready at the moment of trial is to be *hors de combat*, to creep where others fly, to have all one's gifts neutralized, and made practically non-existent. The physician needs to be one of the readiest of men, with an instant command of his resources, so that, when summoned in an emergency, on a sudden attack of deadly disease, he can immediately make the diagnosis and apply the remedy. To the lawyer, this quality is, if possible, even more essential. A sudden turn in a case, the introduction of unexpected testimony, an unlooked-for ruling by the judge, an unanticipated line of argument by the opposing counsel, may necessitate an instant "change of base" and the adoption of new and

wholly different tactics. In all kinds of public debate, in the close hand-to-hand encounter, where the home thrust is often so suddenly given, readiness is of the first importance. It is not the amount or variety of a man's knowledge of a given subject, the statistics and arguments with which his head may be crammed, that makes him a dangerous antagonist in debate, so much as his ability to marshal them and bring them to bear instantly on a given point.

"What a crushing reply I might have made to Jones!" is the regretful reflection that occurs to many a public debater, as he retires heated and discomfited from a contest in which his memory proved treacherous to him. While he is on his legs his ideas seem to desert him: but the moment he sits down he invents the happiest retorts; his knowledge of the subject comes upon him like a flood; the most unanswerable arguments flash upon him without a conscious effort. It is such contrasts — the painful recollection of panic and disaster, the speech that would not be spoken, the reply that dissolved into incoherence, the facts which, like the physician's prescription at the funeral, came to mind when useless, the repartee that sprang to the lips too late — that give such a charm to readiness. William Wirt, in an intellectual contest, was usually one of the readiest of men. Yet in his first contest with William Pinkney, the giant of the bar, he was inexpressibly humiliated by his inability to recall the arguments upon which he had confidently relied for victory. Having argued the case before, he had trusted to his notes for recalling them to mind, but at the last moment found that the notes were lost. In this hopeless condition he had to grapple with his haughty and powerful adversary,

"Glendower Pinkney." "Had the cause been to argue over again," he wrote afterwards to a friend, "I could have shivered him, for his discussion revived all my forgotten topics, and, as I lay in bed on the following morning, arguments poured themselves before me as from a cornucopia."

The value of readiness in the political profession was strikingly illustrated in the contests of the House of Commons with Charles the First. It was the superior alertness and promptness of Pym that, as we are told by Mr. John Morley in his papers on Oliver Cromwell in "The Century," brought the great Earl of Strafford to the block. One of the most striking characteristics of William Pitt was his readiness both in action and in debate. He gave men an answer before they knew there was a riddle. He had reached a decision before they knew there was a difficulty. His lightning had struck and done its work before they had heard the thunderclap which announced it. In journalism readiness is all-important. The most effective and influential editor is not he who, with sufficient notice and an abundance of preparation, can elaborate a brilliant and powerful leader, but he who, at a moment's warning, can bring all needed knowledge to bear on any subject to be discussed. Of the value of readiness in all the leading branches of business, who can doubt? To be a successful merchant or manufacturer one must watch with an eagle eye all the changes of taste, the styles that are in vogue in different countries, the fluctuations of the world's markets, and be ready to devise new styles of goods, or to buy or sell as circumstances require.

Instead of waiting wearily and anxiously for the hour when he shall be called up higher, let the young

aspirant diligently improve every hour in fitting himself for the position which he covets. Though opportunities are sure to come, yet let him remember that they will be worth to him precisely what, and no more than, his antecedents have enabled him to make of them. In the instances of certain well-known men, it was a series of lucky accidents that gave each a start in life; but of what use would those accidents have been to the young barristers, had they been unequal to the occasions, had they not by years of previous hard study, self-training, and self-sacrifice, prepared themselves to take advantage of the incidents which enabled them to pass from poverty and obscurity to independence and distinction?

It has been truly said that there is no view of life so inspiring as that which contemplates it as a constant preparation for important, unforeseen emergencies. What a man already is, generally determines his use or neglect of a great opportunity. "Napoleon I. used to say," observes Hammerton in one of the most striking passages of his "Intellectual Life," "that battles are won by the sudden flashing of an idea through the brain of the commander at a certain critical instant. The capacity for generating this electric spark is military genius. The spark flashes independently of the will; a general cannot win that vivid illumination by labor or by prayer; it comes only in the brain of genius from the intense anxiety and excitement of actual conflict. Napoleon seems always to have counted upon it, always to have believed that when the critical instant arrived, the wild confusion of the battlefield would be illuminated for him by that burst of sudden flame. But if Napoleon had been ignorant of the prosaic business of his pro-

fession, to which he attended more closely than any other commander, what would these moments of supreme clearness have availed him, or would they ever have come to him at all? If they had come to him, they would have revealed to him only the extent of his own negligence. Instead of showing him *what to do*, they would have made painfully evident *what ought to have been done*. But it is very probable that these clear moments would never have occurred to a mind unprepared by study."

It has been said that to-morrow is always the day on which idle men work and fools reform. Chamfort said of the Anti-Revolution Alliance in France that it was always behindhand by a year, an army, or an idea. Lord Chesterfield said of the old Duke of Newcastle: "His Grace loses an hour in the morning, and is chasing it all the rest of the day." Men who are thus habitually behind time are almost always as habitually behind success. One of the most foolish things a man can do is to put off a hard or disagreeable task, thinking that it will be easier to perform on a future day; for then the bondage of habit will be added to the present disinclination, making the task more irksome still. In the legislature, a motion to postpone indefinitely is equivalent to a motion to reject a measure or bill; and, in one's daily life, to say of the discharge of a duty, "Not to-day," is too often tantamount practically to saying, "Never." On the other hand, many a man has made his fortune by his readiness and decision, by promptly determining, at some critical juncture, to expose himself to a considerable risk.

A notable instance of a ready man was Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the order of Jesuits. When

told of the difficulties in the way of a trip to the Holy Land, "Never mind," said he; "if a vessel cannot be found, I will go on a plank." Another example of energetic readiness was the provision made by Sir John Sinclair in 1793, in a time of business stagnation and frequent bankruptcies in Great Britain, for the relief of the manufacturing districts. By his urgent efforts Parliament was induced to order the issuing of Exchequer notes to the amount of £5,000,000 as a loan to such merchants as could give security. Anticipating the delays of red tape and officialism, Sir John immediately went to London bankers and borrowed of them, on his own personal security, £70,000, which he dispatched the same evening to the merchants who most urgently needed assistance. When Pitt, the prime minister, expressed to Sir John his great regret that the money could not be raised for some time, the latter replied, "It has already gone; it left London by to-night's mail!" — at which, he said afterwards, in narrating the incident, "Pitt was as much startled as if I had stabbed him."

To know how to be ready is a precious gift, and one which implies calculation, grasp, and decision. No amount of mere training will enable a man to possess himself of it in a supreme degree; to say and to do the very best things on the spur of the moment; to dash off a masterly newspaper or review article on some memorable event immediately after it happens, or to make instantly, when attacked, a keen and stinging retort, like Foote, or to meet a skillful manœuvre in battle with one more skillful still, or to take instant advantage of an enemy's blunder, like a Hannibal, a Marlborough, or a Napoleon. Readiness is a natural tact, an intuition, a kind of presence

of mind which enables one to meet a crisis, parry a thrust, strike a blow, or say the right word in the very "nick of time." Nevertheless, it may be greatly improved by culture, especially when one begins early in life. In the words of the acute Frenchman, Henri Frédéric Amiel, "To know how to be ready, we must be able to finish. Nothing is done but what is finished. The things which we leave dragging behind us will start up again later on before us, and harass our path. Let each day take thought for what concerns it, liquidate its own affairs, and respect the day which is to follow, and then we shall be ready. To know how to be ready is, at bottom, to know how to die." Therefore, reader, —

"Be thou in the van
Of circumstances; yea, seize the arrow's barb
Before the tense string murmur."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE POTENCY OF MANNER

"Civility costs nothing, and buys everything." — LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

"I can forgive a crime — it may have some grand motive — but never an awkwardness." — MADAME RÉCAMIER.

SOME years ago we were one of a committee of five persons chosen to award prizes for superior excellence in writing and speaking at an exhibition by the junior class of a New England college. The task of the judges was a somewhat puzzling one. Of the two leading contestants one excelled in elocution, the other in thought and its expression. Four of the judges, who were leading clergymen, advocated giving the first prize to the first-named contestant, one of them, an eminent president of a theological seminary, saying, half seriously, half jestingly, "Manner is everything in this world; matter is of no account." The potency, the charm, the witchery of an attractive manner it is not easy to exaggerate. Although its influence is too subtle to be easily analyzed or defined, yet its existence is indisputable; and no man, above all, no youth who has his fortune to make or independence to win, can afford to despise it. "No man," says a shrewd judge of men, "can escape the bondage of good manners. Its fetters may be silken, but they are as strong as those that wheel the earth along in her orbit; and while all must obey its laws, those

laws furnish a currency with which, if he provide himself, the beggar is better off in all the markets of the world than the prince who is unprovided."

A great deal of the estimation in which one is held in the world, and much of his influence upon others, depends upon first impressions; and these are generally favorable or unfavorable as a man abounds or is deficient in courtesy. It was said of Hercules that whatever thing he undertook he conquered. It is so with some human beings; their manner has a charm which makes them irresistible. It unbars doors and gives them an "Open sesame" everywhere. It enables them to carry their points in the teeth of envy, jealousy, prejudice, and hate, and even to disarm opposition. "I have known men," says Dr. Robert South, "grossly injured in their affairs, depart pleased, at least silent, only because they were injured in good language, ruined in caresses, and kissed while they were struck."

"A good manner," says Bulwer, "is the best thing in the world, either to get a good or to supply the want of it." Politicians are well aware of this, and therefore are careful to put a hinge in the neck, and keep it well oiled. In many private callings coarse, awkward, or offensive manners often neutralize the finest intellectual gifts. It seems hard that men should be prepossessed or prejudiced regarding one another by what is merely superficial; but the simple fact is, they *are*. There are thousands of good, even excellent persons in the world with a certain *hardness* of character, whose manners are disagreeable. There are blunt and boorish, shy and reserved men, with whom intercourse is exceedingly unpleasant. It is not that they are malignant, but they lack a delicate

perception of the little trifling things by which pain or pleasure is caused. Again, there are rude, cynical, restless people, the contradictors and railers at public and private tables, that, as Emerson says, are like terriers, who conceive it the duty of a dog of honor to growl at any passer-by, and do the honors of the house by barking him out of sight. On the other hand, there are men of a winning, sympathetic, golden temper, with whom a half-hour's talk is as invigorating as a bath of sunshine. Is there any doubt to which of these classes belong the men who get on in life?

"Civility," says that shrewd worldly woman, Lady Montagu, "costs nothing, and brings everything." The shrewd Madame de Tencin gave as a rule to Madame de Geoffrin, who was educated under her, "Never rebuff any man; for though nine persons out of ten should not give themselves a farthing's worth of trouble for you, the tenth may become a useful friend." Many a fortune has been won by little attentions that were not tinged with the hope of after reward, but were sincere and kindly ones, springing from a good heart and good breeding combined. It is related of the wife of Dr. Dodd that once, when attending an auction, she bid for a cabinet and was at once outbidden by a lady present, upon which Mrs. Dodd immediately courtesied and retired from the contest. The lady, who had set her heart upon the article, was so pleased by this that she expressed a desire for a better acquaintance with Mrs. Dodd, and shortly afterward presented her with a lottery ticket which drew a prize of £1000.

We may ridicule, if we please, this disposition of our fellowmen that leads them, especially on a first

acquaintance with others, to care more for form than for substance, for manner than mind; but the fact remains that, as Doctor Johnson says, in civilized society external advantages make us more respected; and if we would make our mark in the world, we must adjust ourselves to this fact. "A man with a good coat on his back," he adds, — and who will gain-say his statement? — "meets with a better reception than he who has a bad one. We may analyze this, and say what there is in it; but that will avail us nothing, for it is part of a general system. Pound Saint Paul's Church into atoms, and consider any single atom. It is, to be sure, good for nothing; but put all these atoms together, and you have Saint Paul's Church."

Politicians, all the world over, understand the value of urbanity and affability, and hence they are careful to affect a deference or courtesy to other men, even if they do not feel it. Lord Chesterfield, who was an accomplished man of the world and a shrewd judge of men, counseled his son to prepare himself for the world as the athletes used to prepare for their exercise. "Oil your mind and your manners, to give them the necessary suppleness and flexibility; strength alone will not do." The wise old divine, Thomas Fuller, observes that William, Earl of Nassau, won a subject from the king of Spain every time he put off his hat. A celebrated English politician is said to have won an influential lady's support by listening attentively as she explained to him fourteen different ways of making a certain kind of cake. Who is ignorant of the glaring vices of Charles James Fox, and who does not know how utterly they were overlooked by men who felt the fascination of his

manner? His gracious manners saved him from personal dislike even when he had gambled away his last guinea, and was politically the most unpopular man in England. When Pitt, his great opponent, was asked in Paris, in 1783, by some French statesmen, how a man ruined by the racecourse and the dice-box could have such influence in England, he replied, "Ah, you have never been under the wand of the magician!"

Not only in politics, but in every other calling, a courteous and attractive manner is a potent talisman of success, while rudeness, shyness, or awkwardness often neutralizes the finest of other gifts. "If I could command the speech of twenty nations," said Mr. George G. Williams, the able and honest president of the National Chemical Bank, New York, who in his calling has fought his way up from the lowest to the highest rung of the ladder, "I would preach politeness to them all. It is the Aladdin's lamp of success. . . . I do not speak idly in praise of politeness, for, out of the experience of fifty-six years in the banking business, it has been borne in upon me almost daily that courtesy is one of the prime factors in the building up of every career. It is the hallmark of the Christian gentleman and of the keen man of affairs."

It has been said that graciousness can sugar-coat a "No" so as to make it taste like "Yes." Men who are gracious in soul and in manner are almost sure to get on in the world; but men who are awkward, shy, and otherwise unpresentable, have giants to contend with in their passage through life. Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son, "You had better return a dropped fan genteelly, than give a thousand pounds awk-

wardly; and you had better refuse a favor gracefully than grant it clumsily. . . . It is by manner only that you can please, and consequently rise." It is the fashion now to sneer at Chesterfield and to ridicule the manners he commended as those of a dancing-master; but, with all his faults, which were those of his age, he was a keen observer of men, and had a profound knowledge of the arts by which success is won. Dr. Johnson, who did much to make Chesterfield's "Letters" unpopular, would have profited by an exchange of his own habitual boorishness for some of his lordship's graces. That the latter was far more than a courtier was shown by his masterly administration as lord lieutenant of Ireland and his prophecies regarding the French revolution. His counsels need to be sifted; but at times, — as when he urges his son to abstain from malicious speech, from exalting himself above others, from bragging and exaggeration, from indulging in sneers, from saying a witty thing at any one else's expense, — he rises into a Christian teacher.

Can this charm of courtesy, the habit of uniform suavity, be acquired? and if it can, in what way? No doubt, in its highest and most captivating forms it is one of the results of time, an inheritance from generations generously bred. But it is often, too, the result of art and culture. Though when it is in perfection we cannot analyze it and detect its hidden mystery any more than we can analyze a delicate perfume, yet it is in substance what Lord Chatham, in his letters to his nephew at Cambridge, calls "benevolence in little things." Its essence is simply a desire to save others annoyance or trouble, to give them plea-

sure, even at the cost of some denial or inconvenience to one's self; the manifestation of a sincere, cordial frankness, and a perennially sunny, golden temper; a manly deference without hypocrisy, sycophancy, or obtrusion; and this, surely, can be acquired by any human being. This benevolence is not to be acquired by studying rules of etiquette, though they are not to be despised. Etiquette, which consists mainly of posture-making, is often the very essence of ill-breeding. It involves a constant thinking of one's self, whereas thinking of others rather than of ourselves is the very first law of all courtesy.

Of course a well-bred man will be truthful, calm, quiet, dignified, and self-possessed; he will not be unduly familiar or obtrusive; will not be supercilious, boastful, or vain of his gifts or accomplishments; will be respectful to his inferiors, and tender toward the weak; will be self-denying without effort; will listen attentively when spoken to, and not interrupt the speaker; will tell few stories in general society, and when he tells one, will make it brief, and avoid needless details, etc., etc. But these are merely the outward manifestations of courtesy, which has its source within, in the heart. True courtesy springs from *goodness of heart*. To attain it you must be filled with a kind and loving spirit. You must have what Sir Philip Sidney calls "high thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy." If these are wanting, all the forms of politeness are but empty husks, a cheat and a sham. But if you have a sincere desire to please, this is more than half the battle. Frequent good society, and observation and attention will achieve the rest. "Live among wolves," says a Spanish pro-

verb, "and you will soon begin to howl." Live among well-bred people, and insensibly you will catch and reproduce the air, the address, and the turn of those with whom you associate.

CHAPTER XIX

PRACTICAL TALENT

"This is the tragedy of genius — attempting to drive along the ecliptic with one horse of the heavens, the other of the earth, there is only discord and downfall to chariot and charioteer." — EMERSON.

"Tact clinches the bargain;
Sails out of the bay;
Gets the vote in the Senate,
Spite of Webster or Clay." — EMERSON.

OF all the qualities requisite to success in life, no one is more vitally essential than practical talent. There is a large class of men for whom the gates of worldly advancement refuse to turn on their golden hinges, simply because of the lack of this quality, — a quality that springs from the union of worldly wisdom with shrewdness and tact. By practical talent we mean that instinct of skill by which one can instantly use his powers, in any calling or in any act, with the utmost facility and with the greatest effect, to accomplish his ends. Of all kinds of intellect, the subtle, hair-splitting, analyzing mind is the least fitted for worldly success. Its possessor wastes time in meditation which should be spent in action. While he is trying to disentangle the infinite complexities of human affairs, the golden opportunity slips by; when he is ready to act, the time for action has gone. Napoleon complained of Laplace, that as minister he was always searching after subtleties, and carrying

the spirit of the infinitesimal calculus into the management of business. The hero of Austerlitz was himself intensely practical. His victories were due not more to a vivid imagination, which enabled him to look along extended lines of action, than to his ability to deal quickly, and almost unerringly, with the smallest details essential to success. In the midst of a stupendous war with four or five great European powers, he found time to write to his brother Joseph to be sure that his artillery did not fire full charges of powder when half charges would suffice. "Count the biscuits," he writes on another occasion, "one by one. Their quality should be good. The shoes ought to be made of stout leather, not of pasteboard. They cost me five and a half francs a pair."

Julius Cæsar was eminently practical. In the toughest and bloodiest of his many battles, the day he overcame the Nervii, he was completely surprised by the enemy, and forced into an engagement with the fiercest and most resolute of all the Gallic tribes, without the slightest preparation. So rapid was the assault on his scattered troops that no scarlet flag (the signal for battle) was displayed, no bugle sounded, no watchword passed. Yet two things, he tells us, saved his army from being doubled up and crushed in this crisis, viz., *scientia atque usus militum*; that is, "the soldiers' scientific and practical knowledge of war." Charles James Napier, the hero of Scinde, started in his career with the merest minimum of professional knowledge; but he had what is worth cart-loads of mere knowledge, a practical ability and tact which enabled him to utilize the wide experience of the best men who had gone before him. It was this which enabled him, with the odds of fifteen to one

against him, to win victories over some of the bravest warriors in India, and to reduce to unconditional submission fierce hill tribes that from their rocky fastnesses had laughed at the impotent assaults of great generals for two thousand years.

Facts of daily occurrence show that brilliant intellectual abilities, without worldly wisdom, prove a bar rather than a help to worldly advancement. A very high education, too, unless it is practical as well as classical and scientific, often unfits a man for contest with his fellows. It is said that, some forty years ago, four persons met at a gathering in Australia, three of whom were shepherds on a farm. One of the three had taken a degree at Oxford, another at Cambridge, the third at a German university. The fourth was their employer, a squatter, rich in flocks and herds, but scarcely able to read and write, much less to keep accounts. A few years ago a man committed suicide in London who could speak fifteen languages, but could not earn money enough to pay his office rent and board bill. Is there not something defective in an education that leads to, or rather allows, such results as these? Was not Abraham Lincoln's a better training, though it was obtained in the rude home of his father, in the unbroken forests of Indiana, in a Mississippi flatboat, and in the Black Hawk war?

It is said that England is filled with "a great, silent crowd of thoroughbred Grecians," who are indisposed to public effort by the fullness of their minds and the severity of their tastes. Occasionally a powerful and impulsive nature may overcome this repression; but, where one does this, scores of others, trained in a school of fastidiousness rather than one of perform-

ance, have their standards placed so far above their power of creation as to make them unwilling to risk the chances of failure. Who can doubt that such over-education is a hindrance, rather than a help, to worldly success? Of what use is the polish of high culture, if, however desirable *per se*, it is obtained only by planing away the wood till it loses its vigor? Why rifle the cannon till its strength is gone?

Chalmers, in his preface to the "Rambler," states that Dean Swift had a friend on whose worldly success he could not look with complacency. "Stafford, a merchant," said he, "is worth a plum, and is now lending the government £40,000; yet we were educated together at the same school and university." Budgell, in the "Spectator," thus describes these schoolfellows: "One of them was not only thought an impenetrable blockhead at school, but still maintained his reputation at the university; the other was the pride of his master, and the most celebrated person in the college of which he was a member. The man of genius is at present buried in a country parsonage of eightscore pounds a year, while the other, with the bare abilities of a common scrivener, has got an estate of above an hundred thousand pounds."

Do we by this decry culture? By no means. In all these cases it is not mental training that is at fault, but that excess of it which paralyzes the energies, which converts the powers of the mind that should be creative into qualities purely negative and critical. Genius and culture are desirable in themselves; but of what use is genius, if, as Emerson says, the organ is too convex or too concave, and cannot find a focal distance within the actual horizon of human life? Of what use is culture, if it be attained

at the expense of moral vigor, — if, while it gives edge and splendor to the intellect, it draws out all its temper? How often do we see men whose minds are so rounded and polished by education, as to be vigorous in no one faculty! In men not thus trained “the sense of deficiency and of the sharp, jagged corners of their knowledge leads to efforts to fill up the chasms, rendering them at last far better educated men than the polished, easy-going graduate who has just knowledge enough to prevent consciousness of his ignorance. While all the faculties of the mind should be cultivated, it is yet desirable that it should have two or three rough-hewn features of massive strength.” Force, the true motive power, rests in the character, not in the intellect, and it is only the latter that high culture can improve.

How many literary men have failed through an abuse of the critical faculty, by an unreasonable demand for perfection, which results only in timidity of soul, paralysis of the will, and utter self-distrust! Of this the late Henri Amiel, whose thoughtful and brilliant “Journal” has been read by so many persons with delight, was a striking example. Endowed with the finest intellectual powers, he was condemned by his fastidiousness, so far as public performance was concerned, to barrenness and failure. Reading and thinking enormously, his accumulative and reflective faculties grew out of all proportion to the rest of his personality, and the result was inaction. “The real,” he wrote, “disgusts me, and I cannot find the ideal. . . . I have too much imagination, conscience, and penetration, and not enough character. Practical life makes me afraid. . . . I train my hand, and make sure of its capacity and skill; but the work remains unachieved.”

The world's greatest men have not — as a rule — been trained in schools or endowed with the literary faculty. "Men have ruled well," says Sir Thomas Browne, "who could not perhaps define a commonwealth; and they who understand not the globe of the earth command a large part of it. They do most by books who could do much without them." Caius Marius, who was consul more times than any other Roman, who performed as signal services and inflicted as great domestic injuries as any one individual ever did to his country, was a man of low birth and totally illiterate, but able and active. Diocletian, who reorganized the Roman polity, could barely write. Charlemagne, who moulded western Europe, signed his name with difficulty. Peter the Great was a boor, and so was Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, who revolutionized military discipline. Brindley and Stephenson, who gave England her railways and her canals, received but little school education. Walpole, who despised literature, was one of England's ablest prime ministers, and held power in spite of Bolingbroke, Pulteney, and the Prince of Wales, for twenty-one years. The first pope who ever lost Rome a kingdom was one of the most cultivated that ever adorned the chair.

All experience shows that wit is not wisdom. A man gazing on the stars is proverbially at the mercy of the puddles on the road. Too many educated men are ignorant of the simplest things, of practical processes which should be familiar to all. As the author of "Rab and his Friends" said of an acquaintance, they have every faculty but the faculty of using their faculties. What reader of Cottle's life of Coleridge has forgotten the ludicrous story of the attempt made

by these men and Wordsworth to remove the collar from a horse that they were unharnessing? First Cottle, and then Wordsworth, exerted all his ingenuity, and relinquished the achievement as impracticable. Next Coleridge tried his hand, and, after twisting the poor horse's neck almost to strangulation, and with great danger to the eyes, gave up the task in disgust, declaring that the animal's head must have grown since the collar had been put on. At that moment a servant girl came near, and, turning the collar upside down, slipped it off in a moment, to the wonderment and humiliation of the poetic luminaries. The present is emphatically a working age, in which productiveness is the test of ability; and the successful man, therefore, is the man who has tact as well as talent; whose mind is capable of turning all its energy toward some definite end; whose knowledge is distilled from experience as well as from books, and is not stored in cyclopædias or commonplace books, but ready for instant use. Such a man may have acquired less information than his over-educated neighbor, but his acquisitions are turned into faculty. While the latter's knowledge is like water in a lake that has no outlet, the former's is water turning a wheel, and moving the machinery of life. It is true that potentially all "knowledge is power," and so is steam; but there is a vast difference between steam escaping from the spout of a teakettle and steam shoving a piston-rod or driving a fly-wheel.

The career of Mr. Gladstone strikingly illustrates the truths that we have sought to enforce. Much of his early political life was spent in the elaboration of speculative ideas. The result was that he worried England and delighted his foes by theories too subtle

to be useful, while "the rough intellect of Palmerston cut straight to the core of matters of which his far abler colleague could only nibble at the rind." But, luckily for Gladstone, his fine-spun theories were scattered to the winds by the first brush with practical politics, and, instead of remaining a hair-splitting casuist or dreamy enthusiast, he declared that he was not to fetter his judgment as a member of Parliament by a deference to abstract theories. "In a happy moment," says one of his critics, "he was drawn from the pursuit of abstractions, and plunged into a cold bath of hard work. Instead of spinning metaphysical theories, he had to face the actual problems of the day, and to turn his subtle, searching, but discursive intellect from reverie to useful account. The result was that, in enforced attention to practical problems, such as laying excise duties on bricks, glass bottles, etc., he lost none of his old intellectual peculiarities, and yet became the greatest finance minister that England has ever known."

CHAPTER XX

SELF-ASSURANCE

*"Deme supercilio nubem ; plerumque modestus
Occupat obscuri speciem, taciturnus acerbi."*

HORACE.

"The youth who does not look up will look down ; and the spirit that does not soar is destined perhaps to grovel." — DISRAELI.

DR. JOHNSON, in speaking of the complaint that a man of merit is often neglected by the world, declares that the sentiment is unjust. "It is generally by his own fault that he fails of success. A man may hide his head in a hole." That this is a frequent cause of failure, who can doubt? It is a wise saying of Bacon, that, to enter the kingdom of knowledge, "We must put on the spirit of little children," that is, we must submit to be taught by any one who can teach us; but to enter the kingdom of wealth or celebrity, a manly, self-reliant spirit is necessary. Of what use are the most brilliant abilities if they are continually hidden in a napkin, secreted from observation and unused, instead of being made known to the arbiters of place and honor? We all dislike what is called "forwardness" in a young man; yet it is far preferable to excessive timidity, as superfluity is preferable to penury. Time will correct the one, but it is exceedingly doubtful if it will ever infuse life and spirit into the other. "My own experience of life," says Sir James Stephen, "has taught me

that, much and frequently as the faults of self-confidence and self-conceit are denounced by our teachers, they are faults far less widely diffused, and far less dangerous in their tendency, than a timid self-distrust and a craven self-depreciation."

There is no doubt that a great deal of ability is lost to the world for want of a little courage and self-confidence. Every day sends to their graves obscure men who have been obscure only because their self-distrust has prevented them from making a beginning, from ascertaining their strength by a fair trial. There was a time, in his early life, when even Daniel Webster, with all his transcendent abilities, was disposed to think meanly of himself. "My abilities," he wrote a friend, "are small, very small." Had he continued to indulge this self-distrust, he would never have risen to be one of the greatest lawyers and statesmen in America, or to make that reply to Hayne which is the high-water mark of eloquence since Demosthenes. "The pious and just honoring of ourselves," says John Milton, "is the radical moisture and fountain-head from whence every laudable and worthy enterprise issues forth." True as this was in the great Puritan's day, the lapse of two centuries has made it truer still. We live in an age of intense competition and loud, noisy self-assertion; and the timid, sensitive man, who cannot cast aside his shyness and squeamishness and do a little violence to his feelings, who cannot say that he wants anything, or cannot say it with sufficient loudness and pertinacity, must expect not only to be outstripped in life's race, but knocked down and trampled under foot in the rush and roar of this nineteenth century.

No man ever won a foot-race who started off de-

spondently, with doubts of his ability to win; yet how often in the race of life are men so handicapped by a low opinion of their abilities and an exaggerated estimate of those of their competitors, that they are doomed to be outstripped, from the very start!

In spite of all the praises of modest merit, it is plain that the self-confident, loud-voiced, pushing man will always have an advantage over the diffident, retiring one in the tiger-like struggles of life. Nothing so handicaps a man for any struggle as self-distrust. To believe that you will win, after adequate preparation for a contest, is a strong presage of success. A barking dog is more useful than a sleeping lion. As Ulysses says in "Troilus and Cressida," —

"A stirring dwarf we do allowance give
Before a sleeping giant."

We all, in the depths of our hearts, esteem the men of fine feelings, refined tastes, and shrinking modesty, the —

Delicate spirits pushed away
In the hot press of noonday,"

but the prizes of life are not won by such shy folk. "He who is silent," says Amiel, "is forgotten; he who does not advance, falls back; he who stops is overwhelmed, distanced, crushed; he who ceases to grow greater, becomes smaller; he who leaves off, gives up. . . . To live is to achieve a perpetual triumph; it is to assert one's self against destruction, against sickness, against the annulling and dispersion of one's physical being. It is to will without ceasing, or rather it is to refresh one's will day by day."

It is a common trick for men who have failed in life through their own fault, from a lack of "push," or tact, or persistence, to rail at the world, and com-

plain of its injustice in neglecting "modest merit," and lavishing its patronage and its honors on the noisy and self-asserting. But this is the merest cant. The simple truth is that modest merit is very apt to be inactive, negligent, or untrained merit. Again, the old saw, about merit being always married to modesty, has long since been exploded. How, in view of a thousand facts to the contrary, it ever got currency, it is not easy to see; "it is, I suppose," says Sydney Smith, "because both begin with an 'm,' for alliteration has great power over proverbs, and proverbs over public opinion. But I fancy that in the majority of cases the fact is directly the reverse."

The day has long gone by, if it was ever known, when a man could retire into a corner and expect his fellow-men to hunt him out and employ his services because he is of a shy and retiring disposition. Seventy-five years ago it was deemed unprofessional for a lawyer or physician to advertise himself and his services. *Esse quam videri*, "to be rather than to seem," was the favorite maxim of the old-time moralists. Now it is not shameful for any man, high or low, to advertise himself or his services or goods. *Esse ET videri*, "to be *and* to seem" (or appear), is the maxim of to-day. Positive merit, not negative, is what the world insists on, — visible abilities, not hidden ones; and the world is right. How can it be expected to recognize the claims or deservings of a man who chooses to take a rearward seat on all occasions, and is never heard to profess a power to do anything?

Goethe and Descartes have observed that in the neighborhood of all famous men we find men who never achieved fame, and yet who were esteemed by

those who did as their equals or superiors. Why is this? Is it not because, as Amiel says, who evidently speaks from bitter personal experience, "Fame will not run after the men who are afraid of her. She mocks at those trembling and respectful lovers who deserve but cannot force her favors. The public is won by the bold, imperious talents, by the enterprising and the skillful. It does not believe in modesty, which it regards as a device of impotence." This last sentence is, perhaps, overstated. It is not because modest merit is less respected than self-asserting merit, that the thick-skinned, loud-voiced, pushing man wins the respect of other men, but because these qualities are usually allied with others, such as decision, energy, and promptness, without which the highest merit is inoperative. Let, then, the ambitious young man, whatever his calling, nurture his mind with great thoughts. "To believe in the heroic makes heroes." Let him take his place upon the public stands of his profession and invite employment, instead of shrinking from observation and hiding in a corner, remembering that, as the sage of Concord has said, no man can do anything well who does not think that what he does is the centre of the visible universe.

Dean Swift, who was a close observer of men, once said that though they are accused of not knowing their weakness, yet as few perhaps know their own strength. It is in men, he thought, as in soils, where there is sometimes a vein of gold which the owner knows not of. Who that mingles much with men can doubt this? Every man should know himself; but to get on in the world, it is still more essential that he should have faith in his own powers. To

become wise or learned, one must be docile and self-distrustful; but to succeed in life's contests, to win riches or honor, he must be manly, courageous and self-reliant. The truth is, confidence for worldly ends is precisely what faith is in religion. We can achieve nothing, we cannot stir a step to any good purpose, without it. Apart from it, it is doubtful whether virtue itself can exist, that is, virtue properly so called, — the active, ardent, high-minded quality, the *virtus* of the old Romans, the *arete* of the Greeks. By confidence, we mean not the superficial feeling of the coxcomb, who is clear simply because he is shallow, and for the same reason is perpetually babbling and boasting; but deep, calm self-trust, the faith in one's self that is the product of thought and thorough preparation, the confidence that is above one's work, and therefore master of it.

CHAPTER XXI

THE WEALTH OF ECONOMY

“Economy is, of itself, a great revenue.” — CICERO.

“If you know how to spend less than you get, you have the philosopher’s stone.” — FRANKLIN.

ONE of the hardest lessons which a young man has to learn who wishes to succeed in life, or to be financially independent, is the necessity of economy in his expenditure. Doubly hard is the lesson to the youth who has a rich or well-to-do father, who, before the son enters upon a career, provides for all his wants. Economy means self-denial, — the sacrifice of present gratification for a future and greater good: and this to most men is not pleasant. There is no royal road to riches any more than to geometry. It is not what a man gets that constitutes his wealth, but what he saves. It is an old and recognized maxim that the only way to become and keep rich in worldly goods, or even independent, is to save odds and ends, shreds and parings, to keep exact accounts, and to steer clear of everything that savors, in the smallest degree, of waste. The saws in the old schoolbooks about the importance of taking care of the pence, and “a pin a day,” and “willful waste that leads to woful want” are as true to-day as when first published; and men get on, financially, in the world or come to grief as they obey or scorn these lessons. A penny is a very little thing, yet the comfort of thousands

and tens of thousands depends upon the use made of pennies. Industry without economy is as fatal to the acquisition of wealth as idleness. All experience shows that to produce diligently and to take care of the scraps and savings, is the infallible compound process for acquiring riches; and the latter half of the process contributes to the result not a whit less powerfully than the former.

In almost all the cases where men have accumulated great fortunes, attention to margins and remnants has been the secret of their success. Wealth did not come to them in huge windfalls, overwhelming them with opulence, but by gradual acquisitions, and by saving, year after year, the loose money which other men squander. By economizing the little sums which the thoughtless and improvident man deems not worth looking after, — the pennies and dimes and quarter-dollars of which he keeps no reckoning, — the pyramid of their fortune has been slowly and surely reared.

All this may seem to some of our readers, and doubtless is, very commonplace. But, as Renan wisely says, "The worst error one can commit is to reject truth because it has become commonplace. Commonplace! . . . *That means that it is true.* It is the greatest eulogium of an idea, that it has become commonplace." But, commonplace or not, the lesson is one which thousands of Americans have never practically, and many others but partially, learned. It is a fact, as curious as it is melancholy, that, of all the civilized peoples on the globe, we are the most wasteful. It is well known to every traveler in France that a French cook would feed a family on what an average American family would waste or

reject as worthless. Even the "heathen Chinees" may teach us here, — may show us examples of economy which are of priceless value. The lowest of the race are sages in this respect, compared with many of those who would exclude them from our shores. A Baptist minister in China writes home that what an American family throws away in a year would support a dozen Chinese families during that time; while, on the other hand, all the waste of a Chinese family in the same time would not keep a mouse from starving.

The extravagance of American housekeepers is strikingly shown in the waste barrel, the refuse that is carted away from their houses. In it will be found papers, strings, etc., that are valuable for wrappers, pieces of pencil, steel pens half used, bottles, tin boxes, pieces of food, and other articles which in any other country would be turned to use. Even those who buy their fuel, and complain bitterly of its increasing cost, will throw away their boxes and barrels that could be used for firewood. How often articles of clothing are discarded before they are half worn out, simply because they are a little *passé* in style or rusty-looking, when at a small cost they might be renovated and made serviceable for months or a year! When one sees the way in which Americans treat their hats and foot-wear, he cannot wonder that shoe factories are so numerous and profitable, their work forming the chief occupation in cities of fifty or more thousand inhabitants, and that in our large cities about every fifth or sixth shop is a boot and shoe store. How rarely an American will wear a pair of boots, even of the best quality, longer than a year or two! Yet we have known a man, by ade-

quate care of a pair of winter boots, — by carefully cleaning and drying them after each day's wear, and by having them thoroughly oiled, to prevent cracks, four or five times in a year, to make them do good service, though used almost exclusively, for sixteen winters. Of course they were of the best Parisian manufacture, costing, with new solings and heelings and straps, twelve dollars, or seventy-five cents a year!

We once asked the proprietor of one of the great leading Back Bay hotels in Boston why he asked so high a price for weekly board at his table, — a price, as it seemed to us, about double that at which it might be profitably afforded. He replied that the seemingly exorbitant price was due to two things, viz.: the amount of service demanded by his boarders, and their wastefulness. In the dining-room he was obliged to furnish one waiter for every three guests to be served; and again, most Americans at hotels are very wasteful. On an average, said our informant, each person orders twice as much food as he consumes. Many dishes are only nibbled at, yet spoiled for anybody else.

One of the hardest lessons for Americans to learn, at least practically, is that waste is impoverishment. They can all see readily enough that if all the property in the country were suddenly destroyed, the whole human race would thereby be made so much the poorer; but when the destruction is very slight, as when a cup or saucer is broken, they do not recognize that the loss, felt chiefly by one person, falls, really, on all mankind. One of the main causes of our wastefulness has been, doubtless, the exceeding richness of our national resources. When a soil is so

wondrously fertile as ours has been, especially in the West, it is not strange that its cultivators should seek to swell their crops by increasing the area of culture, rather than by the use of expensive dressings, subsoiling, and other thorough methods. Nature has been so bountiful to us that the habit of despising little savings has been acquired by us unconsciously. Cultivating a land "nearly smothered in its own richness," we have, till recently, learned to think it useless to dig down deep, when it was much easier to skim the surface. One of the paradoxes of waste is that the persons most addicted to it are not men and women of independent means, who can support themselves in spite of their extravagant expenditure, but the poorer classes. There is hardly an able-bodied laborer who might not become financially independent, if he would but carefully husband his receipts and guard against the little leaks of needless expense. But, unfortunately, this is the one thing which the workingman finds it the hardest to do. There are a hundred laborers who are willing to work hard, to every half-dozen who are willing properly to husband their earnings. Instead of hoarding a small percentage of their receipts, so as to provide against sickness or want of employment, they eat and drink up their earnings as they go, and thus, in the first financial crash, when mills and factories "shut down," and capitalists lock up their cash instead of using it in great enterprises, they are ruined. Men who thus live "from hand to mouth," never keeping more than a day's march ahead of actual want, are little better off than slaves.

Professor Marshall, the noted English economist, estimates that \$500,000,000 are spent annually by

the British working classes for things that do nothing to make their lives nobler or truly happier. At the last meeting of the British Association, the president, in an address to the economic section, expressed his belief that the simple item of food waste alone would justify the above-mentioned estimate. One potent cause of waste to-day is that very many of the women, having been practically brought up in factories, do not know how to buy economically, and are neither passable cooks nor good housekeepers. Mr. Atkinson estimates that, in the United States, the waste from bad cooking alone is over a thousand million dollars a year!

Every man who would get on in the world — every man who would avoid a slavish, humiliating dependence upon others — should contrive to live within his means, and, on account of possible illness, to add to them. Not to do this is the very essence of dishonesty, for the man who does not keep his expenditure within his income must, sooner or later, be living upon the means of some one else.

It is a strange and lamentable fact that the classes of men that work the hardest, and which might be expected to hold their earnings with the tightest grip, squander them the most recklessly. Eating up and drinking up their earnings as they go, they become the sport of times and seasons, and in "hard times" and commercial crises inevitably go to the wall. There are thousands of toilers, who, though getting wages which should insure comfort and independence, yet, lacking that husbanded power which even small savings would secure to them, live from hand to mouth, and are often near actual need.

Do you say that you get but little? Never mind;

spend less than that little, and next year you will get more, for you will have the profit or interest on the sum you save. Have you ever reflected on the magical effect of small savings, continued for years, upon a man's fortune? Who that is earning even a meagre income, cannot save thirteen and one-quarter cents a day? Yet it has been computed that this petty sum, which slips through a man's fingers imperceptibly, amounts, with compound interest, in thirty years, to three thousand nine hundred and fifty dollars, and in fifty years to fourteen thousand five hundred dollars! If a man smokes a cigar daily, that costs but five and one-half cents, from the age of twenty to seventy, he puffs away, to the damage of his health, probably, as well as of his purse, positively, five thousand eight hundred dollars!

It is gratifying to know that some of the world's greatest men have been the sworn foes of waste, and have looked sharply after their own expenditures. Dante places the spendthrift in the same circle of hell as the miser. Lord Bacon held that, when it is necessary to economize, it is better to look after petty savings than to descend to petty gettings. Washington scrutinized the smallest outgoings of his household, determined to avoid every bit of needless waste. Carlyle, whose early struggles with "those twin gaolers of the human soul, low birth and an iron fortune," early taught him the value of economy, was a determined saver. Among the incidents exemplifying this trait, a friend of his relates that one day, as the great Scotchman approached a street crossing, he suddenly stopped, and stooping down, picked something out of the mud, at the risk of being run over by one of the many carriages in the street.

Brushing off the mud with his hands, he placed the substance on a clean spot on the curbstone. "That," said he, in a tone which his friend says was as sweet and in words as beautiful as he ever heard, "is only a crust of bread. Yet I was taught by my mother never to waste, — and, above all else, bread, more precious than gold, the substance that is the same to the body that the mind is to the soul. I am sure that the little sparrows or a hungry dog will derive nourishment from that bit of bread."

In spite of these noble examples of economy, there are some persons who scorn to stoop to petty savings, which they regard as beneath their dignity and savoring of meanness. Meanness! to do what these great men did, — nay, more, what our Saviour did, and what God in nature is doing every day! Degrading to a man of spirit and of lofty, generous ideas, to utilize odds and ends, and turn chips and shavings to account! This is a virtue of little, sordid, contracted minds! It is pitiful to think that these proud despisers of thrift are often, by their lack of it, plunged into debt, and thereby driven to do the shabbiest things imaginable. Constantly anticipating their earnings, drawing bills upon the future for which no funds have been provided; framing excuses, or rather fabricating falsehoods, to explain the non-payment of their debts, their lives become at last a succession of miserable makeshifts, equivocations, humiliations, and distresses. It is these men who are often found railing against the world, its inequalities and injustices, although their miseries are due almost solely to their own improvidence. So true is it that, as Hannah More says, "There is no surer test of integrity than a well-proportioned expenditure."

Christ was an economist, as the answer given by Him to Judas shows, when, from a selfish motive the betrayer objected to the profusion of costly ointment poured by the Magdalene on the Master's head. The question, "Why this waste?" our Saviour did not rebuke as unreasonable, but explained that this was an exceptional case, to which the words were inapplicable. Several incidents show that the sight of waste pained Him. Even when displaying His infinite power to the multitude, He taught the needful lesson of economy. After feeding thousands miraculously with the loaves and fishes, He directs that the fragments be gathered up, so that "nothing may be lost." Nature knows no waste; she is the most rigid of economists. The autumn leaves are not squandered, but enrich the soil from which the trees draw nourishment; and the bodies of the dead fatten the soil of Sadowa and Antietam for the future seedtime. In the wondrous metamorphoses going on at every moment throughout the universe, there is change (as from force to heat, and from heat to force), but never a particle of loss. The ascending smoke returns to earth in refreshing showers, and the noxious carbon exhaled by every human body ministers to the life and vigor of plants.

Science protests, trumpet-tongued, against every form of waste. She has taught men to utilize the chemicals in the smoke that issues from the chimneys of reduction works, and has put a value on the soot that lines the inside of chimneys, and on the slag and cinders from the furnace. She has discovered a use for the hair, horns, hoofs, blood — indeed, for every part — of a slaughtered ox; a use, of utility or beauty, for every species of fungus, for the sweepings of cot-

ton and ax mills, for the outside wrappers of cotton bales, for field weeds, thistles, and grass, for the stalks of reeds and canes, sawdust and fine shavings, moss and furze, and even the odors exhaled from certain processes of manufacture. Modern ingenuity has enabled men to convert old written parchments into fine kid gloves; to transform fish-scales into brooches and bracelets, and even to use the blood of bugs for a dye in place of the cochineal insect. It has enabled men to convert rotten potatoes and damaged grain into starch; to use mahogany dust for smoking fish, and box dust for cleaning jewelry; to convert the waste liquors of soap and stearin candles into glycerine; to utilize the charred husks of the grape and the residue of the wine-press in making blacks for the choice inks used in copper-plate printing, and to convert the sediment of wine-casks into cream of tartar; to use sandal-wood for filling scent sachets, and to transform horseshoe nails into the finest gun-barrels.

It is said that such is the economy of the French, who are consummate masters of this art, that nothing is ever thrown away or lost in their metropolis. The fallen leaves of the Palais Royal Garden are sold for many thousand francs, for manure. Of the dead leaves of the Tuileries Gardens, which are highly prized by horticulturists because many of them are from plane-trees, that form a valuable covering for seed-plots, from eighty to one hundred cart-loads are sold annually. The leaves of the Luxembourg Garden are carefully saved, to be used in winter for covering tropical plants. Finally, the leaves of the Champs Elysées and other promenades are sent to Passy to be used in the government hothouses there.

It is said that, after a large stained-glass window had been constructed for a cathedral in Europe, an artist put together, out of the discarded odds and ends, a window of consummate beauty for another cathedral.

It is gratifying, amid our general wastefulness in this country, to note that one of our great railroads has just set an example of minute economy in its running expenses. Charles Hayward, the head of the supply department of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, we are told, has just introduced a measure by which he expects to save some twenty-five thousand dollars a year in its expenses. He estimates that five hundred dollars' worth of pencils have been wasted every year by employees who have to write and make figures. Pen-points, which have been thrown away when weak, the employees are now required to revitalize by putting them into a flame. Shopmen, machine men, and engine-cleaners are now required to save their used waste, which is cleaned and restored for further use. To facilitate these savings, a car is employed, called "The Economy Special," which every sixty days visits all the stations on both divisions of the road. At each office the inspector checks up the supplies on hand, notes what is needed, and gathers in the old waste, bent pins, twisted links, and other things that have lost their value in the service. The old pins and links, if too badly out of shape, are sold as old iron. These petty savings of a single road aggregate an amount well worth looking after; but, if made by all the railroads in the country, they would form a sum of money large enough to build a first-class railroad of respectable length, and marvelously to exemplify "the wealth of economy."

While thus urging the need of economy we do not

forget that, like every other virtue, it may be overdone. We are told that —

“ by saving candle ends and sich,
Mrs. Mehitable Green became exceedingly rich,”

and again, that a late Earl of Westminster, who had an income of four millions a year, once dismounted from his horse on missing a button from his coat, and retraced his steps till he found it. It is said that an eminent American author, having been taught when a boy to save pieces of twine, finds it difficult to this day to refrain from untying and untangling the yard of twine that comes round a parcel, even though to save thus a tenth of a cent he spends time enough to earn a dollar with his pen. The wisdom of such savings may be questioned. Dr. Johnson once said that “he who drinks beer thinks beer;” and it is equally true that those persons who, with an abundance of the world’s goods, occupy themselves with endless cares for small savings, get to “think candle ends” as their reward. It has been justly doubted whether among the classes of men who, whether they economize or not, are sure never to go to bed hungry, there is anything in the accumulation of money to compensate for the deterioration of mind and heart which is almost sure to accompany the pursuit of an end so trumpery as screwing a dime a week out of the butter bill. It is easy to be “penny wise and pound foolish.” It is never economy to be a scrub. True thrift is so far removed from penuriousness that it is only the economical man who can afford to be liberal, or even to live with ease and magnanimity.

CHAPTER XXII

THE WEALTH IN SPARE MOMENTS

“Thrift of time will repay you in after life with a usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams.” — GLADSTONE.

“Pick up a grain a day, and add to your heap. You will soon learn, by happy experience, the power of littles as applied to intellectual processes and gains.” — JOHN S. HART.

Two great English writers have made calculations regarding the amount of time of which a man who lives to threescore and ten can consider himself master or spend as he wishes. Dr. Johnson estimates that, after deducting from our allowance of time all that is required for sleep and meals or engrossed by the tyranny of custom, — all that is spent in the exchange of civilities, all that is torn from us by disease, or stolen away by lassitude and languor, — the portion of time which is left for us to spend wholly as we choose is very small. Thomas De Quincey, estimating the time a man can give to self-culture, reaches a conclusion hardly less dispiriting. He concludes, after similar deductions, that out of the twenty-five thousand five hundred and fifty days between the ages of twenty-one and seventy, a man will find not so much as four thousand days left at his disposal for direct intellectual improvement. Four thousand, or forty hundred, he says, will be a hundred forties; that is, according to the lax Hebrew method of indicating six weeks by the phrase “forty

days," you will have a hundred bills or drafts on Father Time, of the value of six weeks each, as the whole period available for intellectual labor. "A solid block of about eleven and one-half continuous years is all that a long life will furnish for the development of what is most august in man's nature."

Those considerations show that one of the most important lessons to be learned by every one who would do any good or make his mark in the world, is the art of regulating and economizing his time. The most precious hours of life are those of youth and early manhood; we are then buoyant, hopeful, and full of vigor, and an hour then, if given to work or study, is more fruitful than two similarly spent in the afternoon of life, or in its chill evening. Unfortunately, in youth we have no sense of the value of time, and when at last we suddenly discover its priceless worth, the best years of life have fled forever. Habits of listlessness, indolence, and procrastination now formed can only with great difficulty be thrown off, and every effort to get on in the world, to fill our coffers with cash or the cells of the brain with knowledge, costs twice the will-power that it would have cost if made in season. One of the saddest lessons we ever learn is that lost wealth may be replaced, though not easily, by industry, lost knowledge by study, lost health by exercise and temperance, but lost time is gone forever.

A fruitful source of mischief in this matter is the prevalent notion that all the parts or periods of our time are independent of each other, and that if some of them be wasted the remainder will retain their full value. But this is a fatal mistake. If you have a hundred dollars and lose fifty, the value of the

remaining fifty is not impaired. Their purchasing power is the same as before. Not so if, of ten years in youth, you waste five. The remaining five have depreciated in value. The reason is that the work of each season of life is dependent more or less on that of the previous ones. Bodily vigor, mental grasp and discipline, mastery of a trade, craft, or profession must be acquired in the early years of life, or they never will be fully acquired. "The three R's" must be learned before we can advance to higher studies. In the processes of all well-directed study there is a rational and orderly sequence by which one advances step by step. Study of this kind is like a well-built staircase, by which you can climb to a great height with a minimum of fatigue, lifting the body but a few inches at a time. But we cannot reach the height, if we omit some of the intermediate steps.

It has been justly said that "to-day's duties can only be done well to-day. Time and circumstances are now favorable; to-morrow all will be changed; other exercises will arise, other objects will claim our attention, and our capacity for performing that special duty will be sensibly diminished. . . . There are few things more discouraging than to toil over a task that ought to have been done before. There is an uneasy feeling of self-reproach that drains the energy, and a consciousness that the work belonging to the present hour is being pushed and crowded out, in consequence of past neglect. Such a state of mind is fatal to any true efficiency."

It is a common mistake of weak persons to regard a long, unbroken period of time as necessary for the performance of any great undertaking; but, if we look into the lives of the men who have achieved the

most memorable things on this globe, what do we find? That they have accomplished them by having large masses of time at their disposal? No; but, in the vast majority of cases, simply by seizing and turning not only the days and hours they could command for the purpose, but the bits and fragments of time, even the odd minutes, to account. As the men who have accumulated enormous riches have generally won their wealth, not in big sums, which have suddenly transformed them from poor men into "bloated bondholders," but by economizing their expenditures, and saving the petty sums or earnings which other men thoughtlessly squander, so has it been with those who, by the nobler avarice of time, have executed great intellectual works or philanthropic schemes.

Hardly any of the great works of genius have been built up amid luxurious and abundant leisure. They have, with few exceptions, been the product of strenuous and laborious effort in the intervals of less congenial toils. Their authors have treated time, not as "a waste land, fit only for stubble and the goose," but as a true estate, of which no nook or corner is to be left uncultivated. Therefore they have been misers of minutes, and the hours which other men spend in needless slumber, in lounging, or in idle or formal visits, they have redeemed to execute tasks which to the languid or indolent seem impossible.

It is wonderful what results have been achieved by the heroic workers who have seized on spare moments and turned larger fragments of leisure to golden account. Madame de Genlis, in a work on "Time," tells us that the famous Chancellor D'Aguesseau, observing that his wife always delayed ten or twelve minutes before she came down to dinner, and reluc-

tant to lose so much time daily, began the composition of a work which he prosecuted only while thus kept waiting. At the end of fifteen years a book in three quarto volumes was completed, which ran through three editions, and was held in high repute. Madame de Genlis profited by this example. Having to wait at the dinner hour in the Palais Royal for Madame de Chartres, who was always fifteen or twenty minutes late, she utilized the time by copying a selection of poems from eminent authors. It is told of a German critic that he could repeat the entire Iliad of Homer with scarcely an error. How many years, think you, did he spend in depositing the immortal epic in his brain? Years he had not to spare, or months, or weeks, or even entire days, for he was a physician in the full tide of practice; but he contrived to store in his memory the twenty-four books of the old bard of "Scio's rocky isle" in the brief, disconnected snatches of time while hurrying from one patient to another. Dr. Mason Good, a celebrated English physician, performed a similar feat, having contrived to translate the whole of Lucretius during his long walks in London to visit his patients. Taking a leaf or two of the original in his pocket, he would read a passage two or three times as he walked along, until he had engraved it upon the tablet of his memory; then he would turn it into English, meditate upon the translation, correct and polish it until he could improve it no more. Proceeding thus with several passages, he would, on returning home, write the translations on paper; and thus, without interference with his professional labors, the entire work was turned into English verse. Dr. Erasmus Darwin composed nearly all his poems and other works on

his way to and from his patients, — jotting down his thoughts on little scraps of paper which he carried about with him for the purpose. His grandson, the illustrious author of “*The Origin of Species*,” did his masterly work, in spite of ill-health and long periods of semi-invalidism, by utilizing every ounce of his strength and every moment of his time. Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, studied in his carriage, and thus prepared himself to write, on professional and other themes, works which still have an enduring value. The great Cuvier studied comparative anatomy while riding in his carriage from place to place. Matthew Hale indited his “*Contemplations*” while traveling on horseback. Dr. Charles Burney acquired French and Italian in a similar way, in visits to his musical pupils. It was by utilizing odd moments in the attic of an apothecary’s shop that Humphrey Davy won his fame. Henry Kirke White, a persevering student, learned Greek while walking to and from a lawyer’s office. Dr. Spence, a learned and eloquent divine in Virginia, did much reading on horseback. Charles Wesley was incredibly diligent in the use of time, economizing its smallest bits and fragments. In all other things he was gentle and easy to be entreated, — in this inexorable. Once, while kept waiting, he was heard to exclaim: “I have lost ten minutes forever!” Lord Bacon’s fame is mainly due to works written in his leisure hours while England’s chancellor. It was by the strictest economy of his time that Sir John Sinclair, amid a multitude of other pursuits, wrote his “*Statistical Account of Scotland*,” in twenty-one volumes, a work the execution of which would have appalled most men, besides receiving and attending to twenty

thousand letters. It was not to the possession of genius that Elihu Burritt attributed his mastery of eighteen languages and twenty-two dialects, but to the improvement of the odds and ends of his time while working at his calling.

It was said of that indefatigable worker, Sir Theodore Martin, who was engaged in his legal tasks from 9.00 A. M. till 9.00 P. M., that the bulk of his literary work was done between 10.30 at night and 3.00 in the morning. One secret of his productiveness was the way in which he economized the odd, unconsidered half-hours and quarter-hours—the small change—of his time. He never lost a moment. His admirable translation of Horace, which was in his mind, off and on, for twenty years, was executed by thinking over this and that metrical rendering as he walked to and fro between his house and his office, and casting and recasting the verse until the finest mould had been obtained. The late Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, author of “*The Cloister Life of Charles V.*” and other excellent books, wrote all his works slowly in the intervals of other occupations. Jeremy Bentham, the apostle of utilitarianism, was a great economist of time. The disposal of his hours was a matter of systematic arrangement, the cardinal principle of which was that it is a calamity to lose the smallest fragment of time. Though comparatively frail in body, he devoted from eight to twelve hours a day to intense study. The late E. J. Baillie, an exceedingly busy citizen of Chester, England, utilized the odds and ends of time every day of his life. Whether walking or waiting for a railway train, he was always busy with his pencil, noting facts and thoughts.

Lord Macaulay, writing to his friend Macvey Napier, editor of the "Edinburgh Review," urges him to make a translation of Herodotus, which, well executed, he thinks "would rank with original compositions. A quarter of an hour a day would finish the work in five years." Macaulay was entitled to speak thus, for he was himself a remarkable economist of time. Although his marvelous mental gifts enabled him to crowd a day with twice the work of most men, yet he utilized his hours as if he was one of the slowest of workers. On shipboard, walking in the streets of London, in the green lanes of Surrey, or for many miles in the country, he had almost always a book in his hand, — frequently the work of a Greek or Latin author, — which he devoured as a famished lion his prey. In a walk between Worcester and Malvern, sixteen miles, he read fourteen books of the *Odyssey* in the original Greek. On a journey in Ireland, he read between London and Bangor the lives of all the Roman emperors from Maximin to Carinus, inclusive.

One of the commonest excuses for the lack of self-culture and attention to other duties is the lack of time. Hundreds of men, young and old, cheat themselves with the notion that they would do this or that desirable thing if they "only had time." But the truth generally is that the busiest of them could find leisure for the extra thing by utilizing odd chinks and crevices of time, and properly arranging their regular employments. Hazlitt observes that many men walk as much idly on Pall Mall in a few years as would suffice to carry them around the globe. The truth is, that an earnest purpose finds time or makes it. It seizes on spare moments, and turns

larger fragments of leisure to golden account. How many men are there in the busiest classes who do not waste daily in bed, in loitering, or in idle talk, fifteen or twenty minutes? Yet even this petty fraction of time, if devoted steadily to self-improvement, would make an ignorant man wise in a few years, or if spent in works of benevolence, would make a life fruitful in good deeds. Even ten minutes a day, spent in thoughtful study, would be felt at the year's end. A continual dropping wears away a stone; a continual deposit of animalcules builds up a continent. The most colossal buildings are reared by laying one brick or stone at a time on others.

To ask for leisure to do any ordinary thing is simply to confess that we do not care to do it. On the other hand, who but him who has experienced it can tell the rapture with which knowledge is gathered in those hurried but precious moments, by the reader who has, instead of whole days, only snatches of time at his command? While the owner of a large library lounges a whole afternoon on his sofa unable to decide what book he will read, the poor fellow who hangs over a bookstall, or snatches ten minutes from his work to dip into a prized volume, revels in an intellectual paradise. The eloquent Channing, in his admirable lecture on "Self-Culture," says that "it is astonishing how fruitful of improvement a short season becomes when eagerly seized and faithfully improved. It has often been observed that they who have most time at their disposal profit by it least. . . . The affections, it is said, crowd years into moments, and the intellect has something of the same power. Volumes have not only been read but written in flying journeys. I have known a man of vigorous

intellect, who had enjoyed few advantages of early education, and whose mind was almost engrossed by the details of an extensive business, but who composed a book of much original thought, in steamboats and on horseback, while visiting distant customers." One of the wise ways of utilizing odd chinks and crevices of time is to carry a note-book in one's pocket for the saving of his sudden thoughts or illuminations, or the happy sayings of other men. Every writer knows that many of his best ideas and aptest illustrations flash upon him suddenly at strange times and in the most unexpected places, and consequently are lost if not caught at once and secured by writing. It has been justly observed by the accomplished scholar, Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander, that every kind of knowledge comes into play at some time or other, not only that which is systematic and methodized, but that which is fragmentary, — the odds and ends, the merest rag or tag of information. Single facts, thoughts, anecdotes, or expressions, if saved and from time to time reviewed, will recur to the mind, and by the power of association, in just the right moment and in the right place. Locke carried a note-book, to save the scintillations of conversation, and Pope was all his life a miser of fugitive ideas. Both he and R. W. Emerson would rise in the night to jot down ideas and fancies that kept aloof during the day.

"The great rule of moral conduct," says Lavater, "is, next to God, to respect time." "'T is the measure of a man," says Emerson, "his appreciation of a day." Learn, then, reader, to be a miser of time. Glean up its golden dust; utilize its precious minutes; turn to good account those raspings and parings

of existence, those leavings of days and remnants of hours, which most men sweep out into the waste of existence as worthless. Believe us when we say that if you are an economist of minutes, if you hoard up the "wee bits" of life, and half-hours, and unexpected holidays, your careful gleanings will form at last a colossal and solid block of time, and you will find yourself one day richer in acquisition than thousands whose time has been all their own.

CHAPTER XXIII

LIBERALITY IN BUSINESS

"Selfishness is essentially suicidal. . . . If it be true that Heaven helps those who help themselves, it is no less true that Heaven helps those who help others." — JOHN WILLIAM KAYE.

AMONG the things that conduce to success in a calling is liberality in one's business dealings. Meanness in all its forms is suicidal, but especially in trade and professional life. The man who flatters himself that he over-reaches others is sure, in the long run, to cheat himself. There is no man more utterly deluded than he who, regarding the world, like Pistol, as his oyster, which he "with sword will open," never identifies other men's interests with his own; never risks a dollar to secure customers, unless absolutely sure of getting it back with compound interest; never pays anything for printer's ink, whether in advertisements, cards, or circulars; never gives money for public objects or for charitable purposes; and who thinks to get the weather gauge of mankind by cribbing off dimes or half-dimes from tradesmen's bills and never giving dinners. It is true that stinginess sometimes seems to pay, by gradually swelling one's accumulation; but the advantage is delusive. If profitable in one way, it is exceedingly unprofitable in many others, shutting off him who practices it from the sympathy and help of his fellow-men, and

robbing him of many sources of revenue and happiness enjoyed by others. In the vast majority of cases the apparent success of such men is due not to their miserliness, but to other qualities which have been associated with it, such as industry, persistence, and caution, — qualities which would have yielded more if not yoked to one so despicable. The illiberal tradesman, lawyer, doctor, or artisan has succeeded, not by his sordidness in money dealings and meanness in expenditure, but in spite of them. When we hear a man exulting over paltry profits, or find him unyielding in disputes about a few cents, or striving to pare off as much as possible from the price of every article he buys, who does not turn from him with aversion, resolving to have no dealings with such a skinflint? But this is not the only disadvantage with which he has to contend; there is another still greater.

The contraction of the heart — the lack of interest in one's fellow-beings and sympathy with them — is usually accompanied with a contraction of the intellect, and the two conditions act and react upon each other. A mean, sordid, narrow spirit can only ensure safety in small things; it is powerless to stimulate one to attempt anything great. On the contrary, it prevents him from venturing upon any large enterprises that are both richly profitable and safe. On the other hand, there is no kind of business, no profession or calling, in which liberality does not "pay." The trader who makes it a point to give a little more than the exact weight or measure makes his customers permanent. The lawyer or doctor who is careful never to overcharge for his services, and who omits from his bill charges for petty bits of advice, binds his clients or patients to him with hooks of steel.

The history of business teems with illustrations of the results that flow from a generous, noble-minded policy. There was, many years ago, a banker in Paris, Lafitte, the generosity of whose nature made him the dupe of everybody that tried to impose upon him; yet, in spite of this, he had risen from the position of a penniless clerk to that of the foremost banker of his day, and one of the most eminent public men of France. What reader of Goldsmith's beautiful story of "The Vicar of Wakefield," has forgotten the memorable saying of the knavish Jenkinson about his simple, kind-hearted neighbor, Flamborough, whom he had contrived to cheat, in one way or another, once every year? "And yet," said the crafty trickster, "Flamborough has been regularly growing in riches, while I have come to poverty and a jail." Many years ago a Mr. Fowler, a brewer of beer at Prestonpans in Scotland, secured a large sale for his liquor at home and abroad by his liberality, which led him to make it of the best quality. Going up to his vats and tasting the infusion, he would say, "Still rather poor, my lads; give it more malt." It is said of Sir Robert Peel, the great English cotton manufacturer and multi-millionaire, that one of the chief secrets of his success was his generosity toward his superior servants. He invariably made them feel by his kindly dealings that their permanent interests were bound up in the welfare of their employer. A place in his warehouse, though only as a porter, was a step on the ladder of promotion. There was never a truer saying than that of the chairman of an English railway company to the directors, that a hard bargain is always a bad bargain for the apparent gainer, — a maxim which should be

stamped upon the brain of every business man. The hard, sordid, illiberal man *appears* to the unthinking to be very shrewd and worldly wise, because he is constantly repeating old saws and warnings about the rogueries of mankind; but this is because he knows chiefly "the black sheep" of his race, and has no more conception of the kindness which sweetens and the worth which dignifies the mass of human society, than the insect living in the glaciers of Mont Blanc has of the mild temperature and the beauty of the vale of Chamouni. In his speculations on human nature he is a full-blooded partisan of the selfish system of Hobbes, and believes that men are governed in all their acts by a sordid and exclusive regard to their own interests. It is nothing to him that history abounds with overwhelming proofs to the contrary; that thousands of men in every age have sacrificed their lives for their country; that "the noble army of martyrs" have perished in support of a truth or a principle; that the missionaries of Christianity have braved every peril, with no reward but a bare subsistence, to carry the gospel to men in pagan lands. Looking inward for a standard by which to judge mankind and finding there only the meanest motives of action, he infers that all other men are as sordid and selfish as himself.

If the spendthrift is despised even by those who profit by his lack of economy, still more is the miserly man who haggles over pennies and endeavors to "shave" as much as possible off every article he sells and every bill he has to pay. It is true that in general a dollar saved is a dollar earned; but a dollar saved in a way that prevents the acquisition of several other dollars is more than a dollar lost. There

is a seeming economy that is actual extravagance, and there is a seeming extravagance that is actual economy. There is no thrift in the dingy, small-windowed, cobwebbed place of business of the old fossil shopkeeper, nor any extravagance in the attractive, well-lighted and well-appointed shop of the wide-awake, enterprising trader. It is a false economy to wear very cheap or threadbare clothes when one can afford to wear better; or to live in a low, fifth-rate boarding-house when there is no need for him to do so. It has been rightly said that many a professional and commercial success is due to the use of "A-1" writing paper, the economical extravagance of a stenographer, and rich, substantial-looking office fixtures.

Of course we do not mean to deny that there may be exceptional cases where a beginner in business may be excusable for practicing for a while, when struggling hard to get a foothold, even extreme economy. In starting in a business with little or no capital and without friends, a young man may be pardoned for petty savings which, when he is prosperous, will not only be needless but hurtful to his interests. Only let him see to it that he is liberal proportionally to his means, and that a habit of penuriousness is not fastening on him, which, once rooted in the nature, is one of the hardest to overcome. Meanness never "pays." The prosperity of the scrub, — if prosperous he ever is, — attained amid the scorns and jeers of his fellow-men, is a miracle when it occurs; but it is in the great majority of cases strained after in vain.

CHAPTER XXIV

ATTENTION TO LITTLE THINGS

"The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn." — EMERSON.

"Little words make or mar men." — SOPHOCLES.

"Trifles make perfection ; but perfection is no trifle." — MICHAEL ANGELO.

A WEALTHY New York merchant being asked some years ago to what principal cause he attributed his success, replied that it was this, — he had made it a rule always to attend to the *details of his business*. Instead of confining himself to the making of plans and leaving their execution to clerks and other employees, he personally looked after the various things, great and small, to be done. This practice of the old merchant is worthy of imitation in every calling where subordinates are employed. Especially does it deserve consideration to-day, when so many young men are "above their business" and leave the execution of their schemes to inexperienced and inefficient employees, because the time of the chief is "too precious to be wasted on petty things."

Of all the secrets of worldly success no one, perhaps, is more apt to be overlooked or despised than a recognition of the importance of little things. As sands make the mountain, and drops the ocean, as the loftiest and most massive buildings are made of one brick piled upon another, so it is the repetition of little acts which not only makes the sum of individ-

ual character but which determines the character of nations as well. When men or nations have failed, the neglect of little things, which both are too apt to despise, has been almost always the rock on which they have split. No matter what one's sphere of action, be it the management of a household, the conduct of a trade or profession, or the government of a nation, he cannot be successful without an almost "ignominious love of details." How does a man become rich? Not, as we have said before, by scooping into his coffers large sums of money in rapid succession, but chiefly by petty acquisitions and savings, with interest compounding, through a long series of years. In like manner inherited fortunes are squandered, not mainly by large expenditures at any one time, but by a ceaseless drain of small amounts, — insignificant individually, but vast in the aggregate, — the sum total of which astounds the spendthrift, when it stares him in the face. How, again, does a man become learned? Not, surely, by devouring volumes at a gulp, but by submitting to the gradual accumulation of little items and details of knowledge so insignificant individually, so enormous in the aggregate, day after day, and year after year.

Did you ever think of the sum total of knowledge that may be accumulated in a decade, or score of years, or a lifetime, by reading only ten pages a day? He who has read but that small amount daily, omitting Sundays, has read in a year three thousand one hundred and thirty pages, which is equal to six volumes of five hundred and twenty-one pages each, enough to enable one to master a science. In five years he will have read fifteen thousand six hundred

and fifty pages, equivalent to thirty large volumes, or to sixty of the average size. Now we do not hesitate to say that thirty volumes of five hundred and twenty-one pages each of history, biography, science, and literature, well chosen, well read, and well digested, will be worth to nine persons out of ten more than the average collegiate education is to the majority of graduates. What says the great thinker, John Locke? "The chief art of learning," he tells us, "is to attempt but little at a time. The widest excursions of the mind are made by short flights repeated; the most lofty fabrics of science are formed by the continued accumulation of single propositions."

In literature what is it that distinguishes the masterpiece from the merely clever performance but nicety in the choice and arrangement of thoughts and words, even particles; in short, the conscientious and laborious attention to little things, to details? What, again, is the secret of success in war? What enabled Napoleon to win such an astonishing succession of victories, — what but his habits of personal observation and minute attention to all the details of preparation for marching and fighting? His intellect was like an elephant's trunk, which can rend an oak or pick up a pin. Under his watchful eye every point of detail was cared for, and the energies of all whom he commanded, officers and soldiers, were stimulated into action with extraordinary power. No miserly merchant ever showed more exact attention to pence and farthings, or exhibited a more thorough knowledge of the state of his ledger, than did the hero of Austerlitz and Marengo concerning his men, horses, equipments, the clothing and food of his troops, — the smallest details, as well as the totality, of his force.

So with his final foe, the Duke of Wellington; he, too, left nothing to chance, but provided for every contingency, concentrating all his energies from time to time on such inglorious matters as soldiers' shoes, camp kettles, biscuits, and horse-fodder.

In manufactures and trade the importance of knowing all the details of the business is greater than ever before. The reason is that the key to success is held by the man who can turn out the best product at the lowest price. Fifty years ago the margin of profit in business was far larger, and a few cents more in the cost of producing an article was of little account. To-day, competition is so keen that one must look to a large volume of sales for his profits, and be content to sell on a very narrow margin. The man who can undersell his neighbor by the eighth of a cent gets the customers and controls the market. The only way to do this is to study new methods and invent more economical processes than those of one's competitors, looking after savings that once would have been scorned.

In professional callings a similar watchfulness regarding details is necessary. Let a lawyer neglect the details of his case, matters seemingly trivial or insignificant, and he will be almost sure to lose it; for some vital point, perhaps the keynote of the whole, will be likely to escape his attention. The discrepancy of a single letter between the *capias* and the declaration in a lawsuit in London, — "sheriff" being written in one and "sheriffs" in the other, — vitiated the proceedings, and enabled a rogue who had been arrested to escape to India and cheat the plaintiff, a woman, out of a considerable sum of money. By the omission of a single word from a will, Mr.

Butler, an eminent London conveyancer, deprived a lady of a legacy of seventy thousand dollars a year.

Why do our lives bring us so much less happiness than they ought? Is it not because we neglect to gather up the little enjoyments, the small pleasures, which every hour offers to our acceptance? Is it not because, striving after a sum total, we forget the ciphers of which it is composed? because, stretching out our hands to catch the stars, we forget the flowers, so numerous, so fragrant, so beautiful, that grow at our feet? "What we call little things," says the thoughtful Henri Frédéric Amiel, "are merely the causes of great things. They are the beginning, the embryo, and it is the point of departure which, generally speaking, decides the whole future of an existence. One single black speck may be the beginning of a gangrene, of a storm, of a revolution. From one insignificant misunderstanding hatred and separation may finally issue. An enormous avalanche begins by the displacement of an atom, and the conflagration of a town by the falling of a match."

In view of all these facts, so pregnant and so obvious, is it not surprising that men will go on neglecting details? Is it not yet more surprising that many deem it beneath their dignity to attend to them, and when they hear of the success of some man more solid than brilliant, will say contemptuously that he is "great in little things"? Why, it is the greatest men who recognize most keenly, and are most alive — and that just in proportion to their greatness — to the importance of little things. They know that it is of little things that the greatest are made; that it is the multitudinous sands that make the sea beach; that it is the countless individual trees that make the

forest; that it is of myriad shells of infinitesimal animalcules that the white cliffs of Albion, "the silver-coasted isle," and whole continents are composed, — animalcules so microscopically small that a German scientist computes that a million of their shells lie in a cubic inch of space.

Finally, is it not on the little courtesies of life that man's earthly happiness chiefly depends, "the picayune compliments," which, as Henry Clay once said, "strike deepest to the grateful and appreciative heart"? But a greater man than Henry Clay, Goethe, has said, with a depth and subtlety of thought based on a larger and more varied experience of life: "A susceptibility to delicate attentions, a fine sense of the exquisite and delicate tendernesses of manner and thought, constitutes in the mind of its possessors the deepest undercurrent of life, — the felt and treasured, but unseen and inexpressible riches of affection. . . . There is a daily attention to the slight courtesies of life, which alone can preserve the freshness of passion. The easy surprises of pleasure, earnest cheerfulness of assent to slightest wishes, the habitual respect to opinions, the polite abstinence from personal topics in the company of others, unwavering attention to his or her comfort, both abroad and at home, and, above all, the careful preservation of those proprieties of conversation and manner which are sacred before the world, — these are some of the secrets of that rare happiness which age and habit alike fail to impair or diminish."

CHAPTER XXV

CULTIVATE CHEERFULNESS

"The cheerful man is a moral tonic to all about him. . . . He lives in the sunshine, and is not only illuminated, but is in his turn an illumination." — ANN MOZLEY.

THERE is an oft-quoted saying of David Hume, that he would rather have a cheerful disposition, inclined always to look at the bright side of things, than, with a gloomy mind, to possess an estate of £10,000 a year. Hume was right in his choice, for a cheerful nature, like a Claude Lorraine glass, tinges all things with sunlight; while a discontented temper makes itself miserable everywhere. If the soul is happily disposed, all things wear a roseate hue, and misery almost wants a name. But if the soul be not so disposed, all pleasures are like delicate wines in a mouth tinged with gall. This truth was strikingly illustrated in the lives of two English noblemen in the reign of Charles II., whom Macaulay thus contrasts: "It should seem that his (Shrewsbury's) situation was one which Peterborough might have envied. But happiness and misery are from within. Peterborough had one of those minds of which the deepest wounds heal and leave no scar; Shrewsbury had one of those minds in which the slightest wound may fester to the death." If the world belongs to those who enjoy it, then the cheerful are the real possessors of the earth; for it is they

who "see the glory in the grass, the splendor in the flower." But cheerfulness is not only a condition of happiness; it is an indispensable condition of the very best work. It has been justly said that as happiness depends mainly upon occupation, so does intellect upon happiness. Cheerfulness, therefore, is evidently the proper mood for the learner; it is the mood of receptivity, the opening of the whole nature to the light. It is emphatically the mood for the writer, the literary producer. One might as well expect ripe fruitage from winter as a full intellectual maturity from gloom.

Whatever we undertake, especially of an intellectual kind, the life and soul of success in it are the cheerfulness and elasticity of the spirit. It is in the sunshine of the heart that the fruits of the intellect must ripen and be mellowed. The most effective work is full-hearted work, that which comes from the head or hand of him whose heart is glad, and is therefore done *con amore*. The mist and fog and cloudiness of the spirit must be dissipated before the light can shine forth in its full effulgence, warmth, and power; and a student or author who toils on moodily and doggedly will generally be as unhappy in the end he reaches as in the means he employs. "Give us," exclaims Carlyle, who, though a chronic growler, recognized the value of the virtue he lacked, "oh, give us the man who sings at his work! One is scarcely sensible of fatigue whilst he marches to music. The very stars are said to make harmony as they revolve in their spheres. Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness, altogether past calculation in its powers of endurance."

What a blessing to society is a cheerful man! He is a moral tonic to every one with whom he comes in

contact. There are some persons so happily constituted that they can find good in everything. They can distill sweetness from gall and wormwood. No sky is so black, but that they can discover a gleam of sunshine in some part of it. Enjoying the sweet of life as it drops into their cup, they can also find a heart to laugh at the bitter, and amid the sorest trials are able to give croaking to the crows and care to the winds.

Such persons are not, as we are apt to think, weak and unreflective. On the contrary, the truly cheerful man recognizes the ills of life and acknowledges them, but confronts and rises above them. He knows oftentimes a hundredfold more of the depths of gloom that underlie life than does the pessimist, but he has faith in the light that scatters the darkness and in the achievement which makes life a reality instead of a lie. His happy disposition does not express itself in the looks deprecated in the well-known lines, —

“Send me hence ten thousand miles
From the face that always smiles,”

— looks that indicate a shallow cheerfulness, but which is too ostentatious to be real, — but it is a union of fine qualities, — of an unruffled temper, a clear judgment, and well-proportioned mental powers. It is the expression of an inward harmony.

Great powers of mind are not usually friendly to this habit of thought and feeling. Great poets, philosophers, deep thinkers, and great wits especially, are not commonly cheerful men. They all have at seasons a spell of Bunyan's experience, when they feel “as if the sun that shineth in the heavens did grudge to give light, and as if the stones in the street and the tiles upon the houses did bend themselves against

them," — a frame of mind which springs from a lack of balance in the faculties; for, wherever there is excess, there must also be defect. Grimaldi, the prince of clowns, was pursued by a devouring melancholy when off the stage. Scarron, seemingly the merriest and most buoyant of men, often writhed with pain, both bodily and mental, when all Paris was laughing at his wit. Molière was a prey to melancholy; his physiognomy is that of a tragic rather than a comic genius. Swift, who was never known to smile, regarded life as a curse, and always read the third chapter of Job on his birthday. Curran, who set the tables in a roar by his merry talk, was usually so sad that he declared he never went to bed without wishing he might never rise again.

Some notable exceptions there have been to the general rule in this matter. Fénelon was a "man of cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows;" Jeremy Taylor, who, when his house had been plundered, his family turned out of doors, and all his worldly estate sequestered, could congratulate himself that his enemies had left him "the sun and moon, a loving wife, and many friends to pity him, and some to relieve him," was a most cheerful man. "I can still discourse," he wrote, "and, unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience. They have still left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them, too." Fielding was a preëminently cheerful man. Struggling all through life with debt, difficulty, and bodily suffering, he yet, in the opinion of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "had known more happy moments than any (other) person on earth."

Walter Scott was a man of contagious cheerfulness, which infected every circle he entered. Sydney Smith was all his life a memorable example of cheerfulness. It was not true of him, as of so many great wits, that his —

“laughter was but an art
To drown the outcry of the heart.”

On the contrary, he always looked on the sunny side of things; the darkest cloud had to him its silver lining. In ill health and in old age his buoyant, elastic spirits never forsook him; and he could write to a friend just before he died, “I have gout, asthma, and several other maladies, but am otherwise very well.” To Lady Carlisle he wrote, when nearing his end, “If you hear of sixteen or eighteen pounds of flesh wanting an owner, they belong to me. I look as if a curate had been taken out of me.”

Considering that, as Goethe says, “in every human condition foes lie in wait for us, invincible, save by cheerfulness and equanimity,” is it not strange that so few persons take pains to cultivate these virtues? Ruskin asserts that cheerfulness is just as natural to a man in strong health as color to his cheek; that wherever there is habitual gloom, there must be either bad air, unwholesome food, improperly severe labor, or erring habits of life. But this statement, though true in the main, is exaggerated. Nothing is more certain than that a melancholy temperament and a prevailing gloomy mind may coexist with perfect bodily health. A large preponderance of sensibility in a man's constitution will induce periods of deep melancholy. As genius implies an excess of nervous force, and hence of sensibility, Aristotle was right in saying that all men of genius are melancholy. But, although largely

a matter of temperament, and inborn, yet cheerfulness of disposition is susceptible of culture and training, like any other moral quality or habit of mind.

There are two sides of life, and of every event in life, and we can school ourselves to look at the bright side, or we can habituate ourselves to look only at the dark one. We can cultivate a habit of being pleased and happy, or a habit of being querulous and miserable. We can school ourselves to be like Lord Holland, who, it is said, always came down to breakfast with the air of a man who had met with some signal good fortune, or to be like Joseph R. Neal's Mr. Trepid, who, when saluted with a "How do you do?" invariably responded: "A great deal worse than I was, thank'e — most dead, I'm obliged to you. I am always worse than I was, and I don't think I was ever any better." Again, environment has much to do with cheerfulness, and this we can often control. Climate and the scenery amid which one lives powerfully affect the spirits, especially if he is of a finely strung and very sensitive nature. Some one says that every locality is like a dyer's vat, and that the residents take its color, or some other color, from it, just as the clothes do which the dyer steeps in stain.

The Englishman, saturated with the fogs of his island, is notoriously less cheerful than the inhabitant of sunny France. How sadly the level, monotonous landscape about Cambridge, England, wrought on the powerful mind of Robert Hall, depressing him often to the level of its own flatness! Overhung often with fogs, or dreary with rains, it makes one feel, says the author of "Self-Formation," who had been a Fellow of the University, "like a turkey upon a plain; he is

powerless to take wing." It was probably one of the causes of the poet Gray's low spirits ; and we know that Arnold of Rugby, naturally vigorous and buoyant in spirits, found the dreadful midland monotony of Warwickshire, with its endless succession of enclosed fields and hedgerow trees, equally depressing, leading him to seek a holiday home in the Lake district, where he found all that his soul longed for, — streams, hills, woods, and wild flowers.

There is no doubt that bodily exercise, properly taken, is a great promoter of cheerfulness. Dr. Johnson, who suffered so much from constitutional melancholy, discovered that, to avoid it, he must fight against the indolence which naturally creeps over a morbid temperament, and engage in regular and persistent exercise. By seeking the society of cheerful, sunny men ; by walking often in the open air, and by strengthening his nerves by daily friction, a spare diet, frequent change of occupation, and especially by engaging in merry and mirth-provoking conversation, even when, as he said, " his heart was ready to burst with gloomy emotions," he greatly crippled his life-long foe, though he never quite killed it. Had he also conquered his habit of keeping late hours, and of drinking strong tea from a kettle " that was never dry," he might have mitigated still more the disease that preyed upon him.

Need we say that egotism, selfishness, and skepticism are deadly foes to cheerfulness, or that an important condition of it is occupation ? The man who would be blithe and buoyant must be a busy one, — not a drudge, but having always something to engage his attention. If naturally predisposed to melancholy, he should shun vacant hours. Much leisure, though

seemingly very desirable, is almost as much to be deprecated as too little. The last, but not least, condition of cheerfulness which we shall name, is a *good conscience*. No man can be cheerful without courage, and therefore we must have no bugbears, no frightful fiends in our rear, which we dare not look back upon. We must be able to look everything in the face, to take it in its just proportions; but we must not dwell or brood upon it. We must be on our guard, not only against great troubles, but against small ones also, which, by undue attention to them, are swollen into great ones. "Though sometimes small evils," says Richard Sharp, "like invisible insects, inflict great pain, and a single hair may stop a vast machine, yet the chief secret of comfort lies in not suffering trifles to vex us, and in prudently cultivating an undergrowth of small pleasures, since very few great ones, alas! are let on long leases."

It is because cheerfulness is an inestimable working quality, "imparting great flexibility to character," and increasing one's capacity for labor and for the endurance of hardships and trials, that we have treated of it here at some length. As "temper is nine tenths of Christianity," so are cheerfulness and industry nine tenths of practical wisdom. Other things being equal, the most successful man is the one to whom we can say truthfully, as the poet Logan says to the cuckoo:—

"Thou hast no sorrow in thy note,
No winter in thy year."

If we wish to help our fellow-men, we can hardly do them a greater service than by being so strong, earnest, and cheerful that the disheartened will take a new lease of hope from us, the doubting a new

vision of faith, and the fallen a new impulse to get on their feet again. The most effective philanthropist is not he who empties his purse to relieve distress, but he who, by his own cheerfulness amid life's trials, pours a new tide of victorious faith and hope into the souls of men.

CHAPTER XXVI

OPPORTUNITY

"No man is born into the world whose work is not born with him ; there is always work, and tools to work withal, for those who will." —
LOWELL.

" All common things, each day's events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend."

LONGFELLOW.

THERE is an old Roman legend that a Sibyl once came to the palace of Tarquin the Second, offering for sale at a high price nine volumes. The offer was declined. Turning away, she burned three of the volumes. A little later she offered the remaining six for the price originally asked for the nine. Again the offer was refused, and three more of the volumes were consigned to the flames. A third time she came, bringing now only three, but refusing to part with them for any less price than was asked at the first. Perplexed at her conduct, Tarquin consulted his augurs, and bought the books. They proved to be the priceless "Sibylline Verses ;" but it was too late to secure the precious volumes which had been lost. The moral pointed by this Roman myth, is that the great opportunities of life, like the Sibylline books, both rise in price and diminish in number every time that we neglect to avail ourselves of them. Among the qualities that conduce to worldly success, not the least im-

portant is acuteness in discerning and promptness in seizing opportunities for self-advancement. If biography teaches any lesson, it is that there is a golden moment in the life of almost every man which he can seize and turn to his lasting advantage, — that “there is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” “I have heard Cardinal Imperiali say,” observes Montesquieu, “‘There is no man whom Fortune does not visit once in his life, but when she does not find him ready to receive her, she walks in at the door and flies out at the window.’” Whose experience does not confirm this saying? All life shows that opportunity is coy. The careless, the unobservant, the procrastinators, the indolent, fail to see it, or clutch at it when it is gone. The sharp fellows detect it instantly, and catch it while on the wing.

Dean Alford rightly observes that there are moments in life which are worth more than years. “We cannot help it. There is no proportion between spaces of time in importance or in value. A stray, unthought-of five minutes may contain the event of a life, and this all-important moment—who can tell when it will be upon us?” There is hardly any view of life more important than that which contemplates it as a preparation for important, unforeseen emergencies. A legislative debate, a political crisis, a battle, a sudden rise or fall of prices, or a hundred other occasions of less moment, may in a single hour tax to the uttermost and crown with resplendent success the preparation of a lifetime.

When that shrewd man of the world, Sir Walter Raleigh, saw Queen Elizabeth pause at a puddle in the street, he flung down his laced jacket into it and won the proud woman’s favor. We have stated in a

previous chapter how when, in the early part of Thorwaldsen's career, fortune seemed to scowl upon him, and his profession appeared a blunder, he was about returning from Rome to Denmark in utter despair; how suddenly the clouds lifted, his genius found recognition, and he was rewarded for all his struggles. So was it with hundreds of eminent painters, inventors, musical composers, in all civilized lands, the turning-point in whose fortunes came in the hour of their deepest discouragement, when least expected. So was it with Dr. Johnson, Wordsworth, Curran, Erskine, Crabbe, and many other poets, barristers, and authors. So was it with Thackeray, struggling on after his "Vanity Fair" had been refused by a dozen publishers; with Balzac, toiling bravely on in a lonely garret with an ardor which neither poverty nor debt, nor even hunger, could dampen; with Havelock, working and waiting thirty-four weary years for his opportunity, and "seeing drunkards and fools put above his head;" with Oliver Ellsworth, — the foremost pillar in the United States Senate during Washington's whole administration, and also chief justice of the Supreme Court, — who, after his call to the bar, walked from his farm to Hartford and back, twenty miles, daily, and for three years earned but fifteen dollars a year; with Lyman J. Gage, slaving and drudging for years as errand boy, postal clerk, day laborer in a lumber yard, night watchman, bookkeeper, and paying teller. To all these brave men an opportunity came at last of doing with success and credit their proper life work, and with it a reward for all their self-denial and persistent toil.

Such a golden opportunity, if we are faithful to our duty, will come to every one of us. Only let us see

to it that we are ready for it when it comes. We would do well to remember that a great occasion will be worth to us just what our antecedents have enabled us to make of it, and no more. What a signal piece of good fortune in the life of Daniel Webster was the onslaught on New England made by the fiery Carolinian, John Y. Hayne, the reply to which — confessedly the high-water mark of eloquence since Demosthenes — won for the Northern senator undying fame! But of what advantage would this splendid opportunity have been to him, if his whole previous life had not been a training and a preparation for it — if he had not, with the instinct of genius, made a profound study of the constitutional questions involved in the debate, and thus fully equipped himself for the assault which he repelled with such crushing energy?

To what did that heroic soldier, Sir Charles James Napier, owe his marvelous success after years of weary waiting for advancement in his profession? In his youth he fought under Wellington in Portugal and Spain, and then came the long peace succeeding Waterloo, which deprived him for nearly forty years of all opportunity of distinguishing himself in the tented field. What did he do? Fold his arms in disgust, and abandon as useless all study of the military art? No; he read all the treatises on it and all the biographies of great captains which he could command; studied their campaigns thoroughly and critically, with maps and plans, and never ceased his efforts to perfect himself in all the branches and details of military science, till at last the hour came when his services were needed, and he was sent by the British government to Scinde, of which, thanks to his long and patient self-training, he became the world-

renowned conqueror against fearful odds, — winning his last decisive victory with eighteen hundred men over thirty thousand Sikhs, the bravest fighters of India.

Are any of us briefless barristers, physicians with few patients, or neglected artists, weary of waiting for a test and acknowledgment of our powers? Instead of impatiently chafing and fretting at the public neglect, let us utilize, like Napier, every moment of our enforced leisure in fitting ourselves for the position to which we aspire. It is only as we discharge the duties and abide the tests of our present obscure everyday life, that we shall be prepared for the great requirements, the signal opportunities, the supreme test days, that may be in store for us. The world is always searching for men of ability and integrity to fill places of responsibility, and we may rely upon it that water does not more naturally seek its level than work does the best man. The editor of "Success," in speaking of the unusual opportunities for successful careers which the present new century will offer to young men, says, "The whole world is expecting great changes in the activities of trade, commerce, invention; politics will have a new basis; agriculture will feel the impetus of a wider range of foreign demand; the stimulus of competition will give attractiveness to labors and pursuits which have hitherto been neglected, and the host of young men who are now cudgeling their wits to find an open course to making a competent livelihood will find not a gate closed across the path of him who has conscientiously trained his head and his hand. . . . Our present generation of coming men, youths of from fifteen to eighteen, can have not the least ground for fearing the temper and

promise of the times into which their lives are going. Never before in the world's history has there been such a call from the near future to a rising army of eager workers. Science has probed the secrets of things, and the practical application of knowledge to all the lines of labor has lifted even menial services to a place of dignity, provided always that the operator is master of what he takes into hand."

It is true, as another has said, that "competition has lessened and must yet lessen, the wages of skill; but combinations of capital that can afford to accept very small dividends on immense investments have lessened, and will yet lessen, the price of necessary articles, so that there will be scarcely any decrease in the purchasing power of incomes. Moreover, activities bid fair to multiply in almost every field of industry. Discovery never flags, vast schemes of improvement and reform continually change the currents of effort, and with every new movement of capital and enterprise thousands of fresh opportunities fly open to the young men who are best prepared to enter and take hold. Young men of to-day find their careers beginning on the rim of a profoundly interesting century almost spent, and the golden loop of a splendid new age lies before them, encircling such possibilities of stimulating discovery, change, readjustments, and enterprise as never before presented themselves to a brave and earnest race of workers." How true are these words? Yet the words of Mercury are less persuasive than the song of Apollo. Harken, then to the lyricist:—

" There was a man who dreamed one day
Of great things that he meant to do;
But idly in the sunshine lay
The while he dreamed; and never knew

What proud, bright shape was drawing nigh,
Or listened to its thrilling cry,
' Arise, arise, and follow me,
And make your dream reality ! '
Until it passed away again,
And, passing, smote the dreamer's brain
With sudden sense of loss and pain.

" ' Who calls me ? ' anxiously he cried ;
' Oh, speak ! oh, come once more to me ! '
But far away a voice replied,
' My name is opportunity !

" ' Who welcomes me with swift embrace
Shall meet me always face to face ;
But the stern truth is known of yore,
Neglected once, I come no more ! '
And still the dreamer in the sun
Imagines great deeds to be done,
Yet sees, alas ! the fruit of none."

CHAPTER XXVII

"THE NEW CUT"

"Trust no future, howe'er pleasant !
Let the dead past bury its dead !
Act — act in the living present !
Heart within, and God o'erhead !"

LONGFELLOW.

ROBERT CHAMBERS in one of his excellent essays tells of an old tailor in an inland town of Scotland who had gone out of fashion there, and who was asked one day, by the aged and old-fashioned clergyman of whose church he was an officer, how it happened that the congregation was thinning out so rapidly.

"Don't you know," replied the knight of the shears, "that half the parish go over the hill to hear the new preacher, young Perly o' Ginglekirk?"

"Oh, yes," said the minister, "but I can't understand what the people see in that young man that is more than ordinary."

"Neither can I," quoth the tailor, "and I would say the same thing o' that young chield that has ta'en my trade over my head. But it's just the new cut, sir; it's just the new cut."

The "new cut" that had robbed Snip of his customers was a smarter and more stylish fashion of attire, which a youthful rival had introduced to the burgh. In the old tailor's young days little attention had been given to the fit of garments, and still less to the

niceties of shape. Provided a coat, waistcoat, or pair of trousers were strongly put together with good, honest thread, it mattered little that the garments were somewhat awry, — one of them baggy, another tight and pinching. But these golden days could not last forever. Suddenly a change came over the sartorial art. A bright, enterprising young man, who had practiced his craft in the capital, introduced "the new cut" into the little burgh. He studied the figures of his customers, and gave an individuality to their garments wholly unknown before. Under the magic of his shears many commonplace-looking men were transformed, if not into Apollos or Adonises, into fit representatives of "the human form divine."

Nothing could be more contemptuous, at first, than the treatment by the old tailors of the new system. They were never tired of scoffing at the showy colored prints of gentlemen with jimp waists, and ladies in riding habits, which their youthful rival boasted that he got monthly from London, to keep abreast with the march of metropolitan fashion. A lay figure on which he exhibited within doors a series of fashionable coats, and a waxen boy, which he displayed stylishly attired in his window, were subjects of continual derision. "He has no more brains than the one," said the jeerers, "and it is a pity that the other is all that he can point to in the way of family." They had the laugh all on their side, but the rival got all the best custom. In spite of their sarcasms, "the new cut" won more and more favor. In vain did the veterans shake their heads, and prognosticate the speedy failure of the innovator. His business steadily increased, while the croakers one after another were starved out, and went to their graves, each, it is said,

bearing the figure of a broad-skirted Queen Anne coat on his heart, liked a crest patched upon a ham-mercloth.

The history of "the new cut" in the Scottish burgh is its history in every sphere of professional labor. Everywhere its introduction produces similar results. As an old dog hates to learn new tricks, so men in the various callings of life cling obstinately to the old, antiquated ways of doing business long after they have been superseded among young, quick-witted, and enterprising practitioners by better methods. But nothing can be more unwise, more fatal than this policy to self-improvement and to self-advancement. The world is continually changing, and with it change the modes of doing its work; and the first law of success in any calling is that the practitioner should have "the new cut." He must keep abreast with the times; he must break away from the conservative chain-drags and clog-wheels of the world, and move with the locomotive. He must get out of the stage-coach and travel by the "lightning express," or he will be left behind in the race of life.

There is a "new cut" in all kinds of business. The railroad and the ocean steamship, the telegraph and the telephone, have revolutionized the old methods of doing business, and killed some, while others have sprung up unknown a generation ago. Commission merchants, once so numerous, find their occupation gone. The country trader, instead of keeping on hand large stocks of goods, buys the various articles he sells by telegraph as he wants them, — thus requiring less capital, and avoiding the accumulation of goods that are out of style, or that have fallen in price. Great monopolies are forming, "trusts,"

which aim to control the prices of articles by controlling their manufacture, or buying up the entire product. By the reduction of expenses thus effected, thousands of clerks, commercial travelers, and other employees are thrown out of employment, and the salaries reduced of those retained. Another novelty in business is the great "department store," which, by buying goods in vast quantities, especially at bankrupt sales, is able to undersell and crush out the small traders, driving them into bankruptcy or withdrawal from business.

Manufacturers to-day are learning that they cannot sell their goods in foreign lands unless they put them up in packages to suit the desired buyer. The obstinacy or conservatism which leads them to prepare goods in a certain way because their fathers and grandfathers did, is fatal to success. Our consuls have been trying for years to impress on American manufacturers that in foreign lands, where people are accustomed to buy articles by the gross, it is useless to send them packed by the hundred; that the width of cloths must be that of the fabrics the people have been in the habit of using; and again, that when the foreigner requires dimensions fixed by the metric system, it is foolish to send articles marked by feet and inches. The United States have in South America but a fraction of the trade to which they are entitled by their proximity, simply because their manufacturers and merchants will not — like those of Europe — give long credits, and in other respects conform to the business methods of the Latin-American peoples. The European salesman, who always speaks the language of the country, visits it in person, gets acquainted with the people, and makes warm personal friends.

He knows, what the American does not, that sentiment counts for a good deal in the business transactions of the Latin race, and takes advantage of this knowledge. He knows that it pays to have customers bound to him by ties of friendship. He secures a large order, and does not go again for a year, for he knows that in the meantime his customer is not likely to leave him. It is said that British manufacturers have in most foreign countries manifested the same short-sightedness or obstinacy as our own, while the recent surprising commercial success of Germany has been due to the readiness with which her manufacturers and traders adapt themselves to the requirements of foreign buyers.

In all the professions and callings of life there is "a new cut," which he who would succeed neglects at his peril. Of teaching this is emphatically true. The old system of learning things by rote and parroting the text-books at recitations — of stuffing the memory in the study of history with a multitude of disconnected facts, with lists of kings and queens, and the dates of coronations and battles, and in the study of geography with the names and lengths of rivers, the heights of mountains, and the boundaries of States — is exploded. In the best schools of to-day, mental discipline, not the cramming of the memory, is the thing aimed at, — the exercise of the pupil's intellect, not the imparting of knowledge. Instead of blind deference to authority, the pupil is taught to think for himself, to search for the reason of things, the principles of things. The teacher seeks to do for the mind of the pupil what the trainer does for the body of the athlete: to give the pupil possession of himself, a mastery and command of all his faculties; to develop and quicken his powers

of observation, to sharpen his judgment, strengthen his memory, and enable him to concentrate all his faculties upon any problem until it is solved. Finally, his success is measured, not by the number of books he has studied, nor the science he has acquired, but by the degree in which that science has been converted into insight, and "brought into relation with the deeper currents of thought." The teacher to-day who sticks in the old ruts of pedagogy, and avoids the "new cut," soon finds himself without pupils.

In journalism there is a "new cut." The old-fashioned, long-column newspaper, with its ponderous leaders and heavy communications, is out of date. The popular daily journal is not one filled with exhaustive details of public events and disquisitions that smell of the lamp. It is one whose merit lies in condensation; which, with full reports and occasional elaborate discussions of leading events, gives the *apices rerum*, the cream and quintessence of things; whose pithy paragraphs, squeezed into the smallest possible space, may be taken in by the eye while the reader is sipping a cup of coffee, or devoured like a sandwich between two mouthfuls of sirloin or bites of bread and butter. The leading journalist of to-day wastes no time on introductions. He sinks rhetoric, plunges at once into the very middle of his subject, and "plucks out the heart of its mystery." Striking the keynote of his article in the very first sentence, and seeking not only to originate new ideas, but to crystallize into apt and telling forms of expression old thoughts with which in solution his readers have long been familiar, he strives to be brief and crisp, giving results only, not processes, suggesting argument rather than stating it, and avoiding the too common practice of letting

the ghost of one's thoughts wander about after the death of the body.

In all kinds of oratory, especially in that of the Parliament or Senate, there is a "new cut." The long, carefully elaborated speeches of the first half of the century; the lofty, premeditated eloquence of a Webster or the fine-spun metaphysical argumentation of a Calhoun; above all, the stately, flowing, sonorous sentences of a Pitt, saturated with classic quotation, in which "a couple of powdered lackeys of adjectives wait on every substantive," are no longer in demand. The Congressman of to-day makes a businesslike statement, rather than a speech. He addresses himself less to his associates than to the reporters. Party leaders in the Senate fight now with the clenched fist rather than with the open hand — with logic rather than with rhetoric. The magnetism of personal appearance, the charm of manner, the music of modulated tones, have lost their old supremacy, while the command of facts, the capacity of "cubic thought," dexterity in intellectual fence, the power of condensed and vivid expression, have acquired a new value. It is not the man who can rouse, thrill, or melt his hearers by his electric appeals that now wields the most potent influence in the Senate, but the man who can make the most forcible statement, — who can crush an adversary in a sentence or condense a policy into a thundering epigram.

Finally, there is a "new cut" in the ministerial calling. The discovery of new manuscripts of the Bible, the study of its pages with new critical aids and appliances, together with the skillfully directed archaeological researches of recent times, have thrown a flood of light on the Scriptures, and made luminous many passages which were for ages obscure. As a result,

many of the old doctrines of theology have been restated, many stumbling-blocks to faith removed; and the preacher who would impress his hearers to-day must be familiar with these changes. The old-fashioned long-winded sermon, too, with its sixthlies and seventhlies, more somniferous than "poppy, mandragora, and all the drowsy syrups of the world," is out of date, alike with the "Bible twang" with which it was delivered; and a brief discourse, from twenty to forty minutes long, packed with suggestive thought and delivered in 'an earnest, impressive, and natural manner, is now heard in the leading churches. The improvement is a striking one, and the minister who ignores the "new cut," and persists in droning on for an hour or more, with his "divisions" and "application," finds himself preaching ere long to empty pews.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE BLESSEDNESS OF TOIL

“The laborer has his legitimate, his necessary, his honorable and honored place in God’s creation; but in all God’s creation, there is no place appointed for the idle man.” — GLADSTONE.

“We have but what we make, and every good
Is locked by nature in a granite hand
Sheer labor must unclench.”

It is said that the poet William Morris, who was a very hard worker, said to a friend not long before his death, “I have enjoyed my life — few men more so.” When a friend remonstrated with him against the peril of such a life of intellectual tension as his, he laughed at the warning. “Look at Gladstone,” he would say; “look at those wise owls, your chancellors and judges! Don’t they live all the longer for work? It is rust that kills men, not work.” To rust he might have added worry, which kills not less surely, and even more quickly, than rust. What is it that cuts down literary men prematurely or ages them before their time? Not hard thinking, or arduous toil in elaborating and polishing their productions, but irregular hours, excessive haste, high pressure, anxiety, and consequent depression of mind. Why was Gladstone, as he once said of himself, “never in all his political life kept awake at night five minutes by any debate in parliament”? Because, though a prodigious worker, he stopped short of the point of extreme weariness —

of exhaustion. In his hours of leisure he turned the key upon his cares, shoved the bolt inexorably against the whole brood. "The best way to live well," says Mortimer Granville in his "How to make the Most of Life," "is to work. Good work is the daily test and safeguard of personal strength. . . . I firmly believe that one half of the confirmed invalids of the day could be cured of their maladies, if they could be compelled to live busy and active lives, and had no time to fret over their miseries."

Men of fine organisms, "whose quick thoughts like lightning are alive," are the readiest to feel the pernicious effects of indolence. How often do we hear of men dying just because they have given up the only work they could do, and found no other stimulus to exertion to replace it—like the horse mentioned by Mr. Pickwick, which was kept up by the shafts of the carriage it drew, and collapsed when removed from them! We pity the man who is daily overworked; but more pitiable is the man who has no work to do. What a burden he is to himself and others! Many a man's happiness has been blasted by the inheritance of an estate. When Charles Lamb's longing was gratified, as he was set free from the desk in the India office, to which he had been chained for years, his exultation knew no bounds. "I would not go back to my prison for ten years longer," he exclaimed, "for ten thousand pounds." "I am free—free as air!" he wrote triumphantly to Bernard Barton; "I will live another fifty years. . . . Positively the best thing a man can do is—nothing; and next to that, perhaps, good works." Two weary years passed, and Lamb's feelings had undergone a complete revolution. He had found that it is the alternation of work with leisure

that gives to the latter its zest. He had found that his monotonous, humdrum task, the seemingly dreary drudgery of desk work, was a blessing in disguise. "I assure you," he afterwards writes to Barton, "no work is worse than overwork; the mind preys on itself, the most unwholesome of food. I have ceased to care for almost anything." Who can doubt that, if this delightful humorist could have taken half-work, instead of being completely superannuated at the age of fifty, he would have been a far more productive writer and a far happier man? In his case it needed the contrast between drudgery and literature, and the gentle tonic which fixed habits of work gave him, to bring out the full play of his humor and other exquisite gifts.

It is one of the precious compensations of hard work that there is a *vis medicatrix*, a healing power in it, which is a sovereign remedy for ailments both physical and moral. How often great trials are robbed of their sting by the interest and excitement of an engrossing occupation! But against imaginary grievances — against hypochondria, low spirits, and *ennui* — it is a coat of mail. Who, it has been well asked, ever knew a man wretched in his energy? A soldier in the full height of his courage and in the heat of conquest is not conscious of a wound. An orator, in the full flow of his "ignited logic," is altogether exempt from the pitifulness of rheumatism or the gout. To be occupied — what, indeed, is it? Is it not, literally, to be possessed as by a tenant? When the occupancy is complete, there can be no entrance for any evil spirit. But idleness is emptiness; and, where that is, the doors of the soul are thrown wide open, and the devils of discontent, *ennui*,

and melancholy troop in, "not in single spies, but in battalions," and, once in, they cannot easily be dislodged.

We hear a great deal to-day about excessive brain-work, and we read in the newspapers of frequent breakdowns from that cause. Every week or oftener we are told of some clergyman, leading merchant, or other business man who collapses and has to quit work—perhaps take a trip to Europe, and reside there for months or a year—for that reason. College students are reported from time to time as damaging or killing themselves by hard study. We doubt the truth of most of these statements. A knowledge of the facts would show, we believe, that in nine tenths of these cases the cause of the breakdown was not an excess of brain-work, but the lack of something else—such as nutritious food, sleep, bodily exercise, and a cheerful temper. The truth is, the brain is one of the toughest organs of the body, and with proper bodily exercise, abundant sleep, and a plentiful supply of simple and nutritious food, brain labor is as healthful as any other kind of toil. Hard work alone, pure and simple, apart from anxieties and fear, from forced or voluntary stinting of the body's needed supply of food or sleep and the mind's need of social intercourse, does far more to invigorate the brain than to lessen its strength; does more to prolong life than to cut or fray its thread.

It is the rarest thing in the world for a man to think himself to death, unless his thoughts run for many years in a monotonous rut—which is as detrimental to vigor as a monotonous diet to the digestive functions—or unless his thoughts relate to something very painful, irritating, or distressing. It has been

justly said that thought is to the brain what exercise is to the physical organism: it keeps the channels of life clear, the blood-vessels unobstructed, so that the vital fluid courses along them distributing newness of life and vigor of action to the latest hour of existence. On the other hand, the want of thought starves the circulation, and causes men to drivel and sleep in old age, dead to everything but eating and drowsing in the chimney-corner.

If a great lawyer, a leading merchant, manufacturer, railway manager, or editor subjects his nervous system to a ceaseless strain, taking his scanty meals or "pick-me-ups" irregularly or in a hurry, bolting rather than slowly masticating his food, and sometimes omitting it altogether, and brooding over perplexing problems late at night, and even after he is in bed, what can be more absurd, when the inevitable crash comes, than to ascribe it to excessive brain-work? So untrue is it that college students break down from the stress of study on the brain that, other things being equal, the hardest students enjoy the best health. Where one young man, if any, ruins his health by wrestling with mathematical and psychological problems or with the enigmas of Greek and Latin syntax, bad habits, the strain and excitement of athletic contests, cigars, wine-drinking, and other forms of dissipation, and heavy eating at late hours undermine the health of hundreds. The two little fingers of dissipation are often heavier than the loins of Euclid. Professor Pierce, of Harvard, demonstrated this some forty years ago by tables of longevity, which showed that the greatest mortality for the first ten years after graduation is found among those who lagged behind in scholarship while in college. The lives of the great

scholars in ancient and modern times show that a student who takes abundant food, sleep, and exercise at regular hours, sits down to his meals in a pleasant mood, rests half an hour afterward recreates himself by frequent rides or walks and commerce with his fellows, may toil over his books ten or twelve hours a day, and yet live happily till he reaches fourscore years, or even longer.

We believe that hundreds of persons who are supposed to have shortened their lives by overwork of the brain, would have died far earlier but for their mental labor. Dryden, in his famous portrait of Shaftesbury, pictures him as —

“ A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay.”

A fiery soul his, indeed, was ; but we are sure that the body's decay was due to disease, not to the intense activity of his brain. The truth is, the author of the Habeas Corpus Act was subject all his life to epileptic fits, could not move without his crutch, and suffered daily from illness. Instead of shortening his life, it is probable that his mental activity prolonged it by preventing a morbid brooding over his physical infirmities and pains.

Let us rejoice, then, if we have a talent for toil. Whatever the theatre of our labor, be it the field, the workshop, or the counting-room, — whether our task be to clear the field of stumps and stones or the more difficult one, to reclaim the wastes of the mind ; whether our days be spent at the anvil of the blacksmith or in the cloister of the student, in the solitude of nature or in the deeper solitude of the crowd, — let us, one and all, buckle vigorously to our tasks. “ The

toppling crags of duty," says an inspiring writer, "are before us all. Let us strive with toil of heart and knees and hands to scale them, so that we may be brought, with God's help, —

" 'close upon the shining tableland,
To which the Lord himself is moon and sun.' "

But what are the best hours for work, — those of the early morning or those of the night? "It would be hard to find a single man," says an able English writer, "who ever made himself great and was not an early riser." This is a somewhat exaggerated statement, perhaps, but it is no exaggeration to say that the world's most successful men have been economists, often misers, of time, and have, therefore, rarely had the habit of hugging their pillows to a late hour in the morning. Gibbon, when writing his great monumental history, which cost him twenty years of unremitting toil, — the reading of which Emerson pronounces an education of itself, — was in his study, winter and summer, at six in the morning. Sir Walter Scott rose at five o'clock, lighted his own fire, and was at his desk by six, ready for the day's task. By the time his family had assembled for breakfast — between nine and ten — he had done enough, he used to say, to break the neck of the day's work.

It was a similar healthful practice that enabled the great Buffon to spend half a century, or more than an ordinary lifetime, at his desk, and yet find time to be the most fashionable of all the philosophers who, in his day, graced the gay metropolis of France. "I tell all young people," said Doctor Johnson, "and tell them with the greatest sincerity, that nobody who does not rise early will ever do any good." The celebrated

Elizabeth Carter — skilled alike in translating Epic-tetus and in making a pudding — who lived to the verge of ninety years, always rose at six. Mrs. Trol-lope, the mother of Anthony Trollope, the novelist — a prolific author, who earned a hundred thousand dol-lars by her pen after she was forty-eight years old — was at her writing-table at four o'clock every morning, and had finished her work before the world was up. Bishops Burnet and Jewel began their studies every morning at four. "Before nine o'clock in the morn-ing," said Bowditch, "I learned all my mathematics." Daniel Webster, when at Marshfield, during the in-tervals of the congressional sessions, was accustomed to rise at daybreak, and before the family had assem-bled at the breakfast-table had usually written twenty or thirty letters, and would come in saying, "Well, my day's work is done. Now I am ready for fishing, hunting, or anything that may come to hand." Pope Leo XIII., who was an earnest worker in his ninety-fifth year, rose at five. All noted men of action have been impressed with the importance of rising early. "When you begin to turn in bed," said the Iron Duke, "it is time to turn out," and his practice con-formed to his precept.

Of the economic value of early rising and its worth as an elixir of life, and of the superior fitness of the early morning hours for labor, who can doubt? For earnest, effective work there is nothing like these fresh morning hours. Coming at the opening of the day, just after sleep has "knit up the raveled sleeve of care" and reinvigorated the wasted nerves, they find the mind tranquil, fresh, and sanguine, and they are free from interruptions. Work done at this time, when it has the whole day in its grasp, tells more

powerfully than when it is slipped in among the thoughts and occupations of busier hours. In the summer time, especially, what refreshment, what inspiration is there in the cool early hours before the sun is high in the heavens and the heats of the day have come to weaken and demoralize us! Moreover, in morning work there is none of that unnatural excitement of the brain that attends night work, — an excitement too often increased by stimulants. Another reason for working in the morning is that if one dines at night, good work after dinner is often physically impossible, and always unhealthful; and, again, that if one is a social man, or cares for the claims of his family, his evenings are not his own. The evening hours are the social hours, and it is but just that we should devote them to intercourse with our fellow-beings. One great advantage of the early riser is that he has the conscious satisfaction of being beforehand with the world. He has laid up the most precious of all treasures, time, in advance. He seizes the day by the forelock; he drives it, instead of being driven by it. Better still, the briskness and alacrity of these early hours impart themselves almost inevitably to the subsequent ones, and are wrought into the very texture of the day.

Macaulay, when writing his history of England, wrote in his journal on March 26, 1849: "I should like to get into the habit again of working three hours before breakfast. Once I had it, and I may easily recover it. A man feels his conscience so light during the day, when he has done a good piece of work with a clear head before he has left his bedroom!"

We are aware of the arguments by which the night workers cheat themselves, — that at night the house

is hushed, the brain is clear(?), the distracting cares and interruptions of the day are at an end. "You know that there is a gulf between you and the affairs of the outside world, almost like the chasm of death, and that you need not take thought of the morrow until the morrow has come." But this is equally true of the early morning hours; but were it not so, the man who reverses the law of Nature — who sleeps while the sun is shining with his life-giving beams, and works amid the deathful influences of darkness — will find that he is exhausted more and refreshed less than if he had done both at Nature's appointed hours. For every hour he steals from his natural rest he pays the penalty of a loss of his natural vigor, laying a tax upon his permanent constitution proportional to his robbery; and he may depend upon it that invariably, in the long run, he will accomplish less work by attempting to overmatch or outwit Nature than by obeying her wise and beneficent laws.

It has been justly said that the spasmodic utterances of genius may scintillate best, like fireworks, in the darkness of the night; but the morning is the best for laborious investigation — for all that is rightly to be called work.

It is unfortunate that while one may be thoroughly convinced of the advantages of early rising, it is exceedingly difficult, if he has been addicted to late rising — bedridden, so to speak — for years, to act upon his convictions. Somebody has called a bed a bundle of paradoxes. We go to it reluctantly, and leave it with regret. Once within the downy precincts of its four posts, how hard it is to disenthral ourselves from its silken captivity, to escape from its enchantments to the drudgeries and dull cares of life! We are as enamored

of our curtained or uncurtained dwelling as if we were in the cave and under the spell of Circe. How many fervent vows have these dumb pillows seen broken! "We are all good risers at night," says a cynical proverb; but alas for our agility in the morning! "I know of no greater height of heroism," says the writer whom we have already quoted, "no more transcendental virtue, than to spring up from my bed at the first moment of waking. I have tried all ways and means; I have made a hundred experiments, but no one of them can I commend. A single victory is the presage, and, indeed, the cause of many more, but once, unluckily, succumbing to idleness turns the tide at once, and forces back my determinate current to its fountain."

The great Frederick of Prussia found it easier in manhood to rout the French, Austrians, and Russians than in youth to resist the seductions of the siren sleep. After many vain single-handed attempts to conquer this enemy, he was forced at the last to call to his aid an old servant, whom he commanded, on pain of dismissal, to pull him out of bed every morning at two o'clock.

How shall the young man who is a victim of Morpheus, who has been habituated for years to waste the precious hours of the early morning, the quintessence of the day, in bed, and who deplures his enslavement, escape from his silken chains? An alarm-clock is useless, unless it can drag him out of bed. We know of but one solution of the problem: when he awakens in the morning let him act upon the very first impulse, and spring to the floor at once. It is said of forts and besieged towns that if their commanders once pause upon a summons to surrender, if they suffer

themselves to parley, they are lost. So in our contests with the enchantress, sleep ; we must not listen to the siren for a moment. We must act upon the words of Milton's hero to his routed legions, "Awake, arise!" in as quick, immediate a succession as they were uttered. Only thus can we break the charm by which we are spellbound, and make the briskness, the spirit, the sparkling loveliness of the day our own.

CHAPTER XXIX

STARTING IN A CALLING

“*Dimidium facti, qui coepit, habet; sapere aude;
Incipe.*” HORACE.

“Find the right point at starting; strike straight; begin well; everything depends on it.” — AMIEL.

WHENCE comes the proneness of mankind to neglect the needy, and to help those that need no help? Everybody knows that there is such a seeming crookedness or perversity in human beings, prompting them to pursue just the contrary course to that which charity, and perhaps wisdom, would seem to dictate. The destruction of the poor is their poverty, and this poverty, whether of worldly pelf or of knowledge, is always tending to aggravate itself. As in works on agriculture we are told that the dampness of a hillside attracts the clouds to come and discharge themselves on that hill, so that what was too wet before becomes wetter still, while land which has been thoroughly drained is less likely to be visited by such rains, so, in human life, the natural course of things is always against the needy man, and favorable to him who does not want. “To him that hath shall be given; and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.” Who are the recipients of the most munificent gifts from their fellow-men, — the poor, who are freezing for want of fuel and starving

for want of bread? No; it is the rich who already roll in luxury, and can buy anything which taste or fancy may suggest. To what colleges, hospitals, and asylums do testators leave vast legacies? Is it to those that are struggling with debt and embarrassments, and which can hardly keep their heads above water? No; it is to those that are already richly endowed, and to which young men are everywhere flocking. There seems to be a magnetic quality in a big heap of money or worldly goods, which is always attracting the little heaps toward it. But because men or institutions want help, they do not get it. For the very reason that they need a push, they are left to struggle on of themselves. Because they have been treated cruelly by fortune, they get the cold shoulder from man also. In short, to have much, or to seem to have it, is the only way to have more.

Ovid finely compares a man of broken fortune to a falling column; the lower it sinks, the greater weight it has to sustain. A bankrupt finds it almost impossible to obtain a loan; but a man who has no occasion to borrow finds numbers not only willing but begging to lend. Goldsmith tells of "a certain fellow at George's," who, whenever he had occasion to ask his friend for a guinea, used to prelude his request as if he wanted two hundred, and talked so familiarly of large sums, that none could ever think he wanted a small one. The same gentleman, whenever he wanted credit for a new suit from his tailor, always made a proposal in laced clothes; for he found by experience that, if he appeared shabby on these occasions, Mr. Lynch had taken an oath against trusting, or, what was every bit as bad, his foreman was out of the way, and would not be at home these two days.

In all departments of business, — in all professions and callings, — the same principle holds good. The increase of means is difficult just in proportion to the want of means; and this inequality shows itself in the contrast between the manufacturer and his hundreds of workmen, in the power of the great trading-houses over the small, in the enormous rate of interest extracted from the small capitalist by the blood-sucking broker, and even in literature itself, where the publisher's capital will enable him to reap thousands of dollars from a successful book, to the author's hundreds. Look at the learned professions. Who are the lawyers and doctors that are the favorites of the public? Not, certainly, the thousands who are almost starving for want of a client or patient, — who have plenty of time on their hands, and can give to any particular case a thorough examination. It is the worst possible qualification of a young practitioner, — an insuperable ground of suspicion, — that he *needs* business, that he has *time* to execute whatever he undertakes. Were he master of his profession, expert in all its branches and details, it is felt that he would have no time, for people would flock to him for advice and assistance. It is, therefore, not to him, but to the practitioner who is already overwhelmed with business, — who is known to be incessantly occupied, and can give but little consideration to the gravest matters, — that all the world runs for counsel. A few moments of his precious time are felt to be worth more than hours or days of an obscure man's, who has no business, and consequently no experience. Thus, with the briefless lawyer and doctor without patients, things go on in a vicious circle. Because they want business, they do not get it; be-

cause they do not get it, they want it ; and the wonder is that they ever burst through the iron bands within which they are confined.

Go into any schoolhouse or college class room, and you will see the same law exemplified. Upon what class of pupils does the pedagogue bestow the most care and painstaking? Upon the dull and thick-headed, who most need his assistance? No, surely ; he bestows his attention chiefly upon the clever, quick-witted boys — the inherently active, who respond promptly to his efforts, and who would get on by their own unaided energies — and leaves the blockheads to drop down to the bottom of the class, to which Nature has seemingly predoomed them. Thus, because Nature has treated them ungenerously, man does the same. Because they require a push, they are for that very reason left standing still.

It is often said that merit is sure to be appreciated, if the aspirant will bide his time. But what if the time never comes, or comes too late, — when his faculties have been weakened by disuse, and his spirit is broken by disappointment, — when all whom he had wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds? What if, for example, at the bar the management of causes is to be learned only by practice, and if, without practice, an opportunity cannot be profited by, even if it comes? No doubt, as Webster said to the young lawyer who complained that the profession was overcrowded, “There is always room enough at the top.” But *why* is there room at the top? Because but few can have the ability to reach it. On the “high seas” of the law or any other profession, it is easy sailing ; but the difficulty is to clear the intervening shallows,

and get fairly afloat. A man who has merit without business friends will not be employed till he is known; and he can hardly be known till he is employed.

How, then, we shall be asked, does one ever get a start? We know that thousands have thus encountered the world's neglect, and triumphed over it at last. We answer, that unexpected opportunities occur, through the illness or death of old practitioners, and in many other ways, that break the spell. By being quick to seize and to turn to the best use small opportunities of employment and self-advancement, which fortune is likely at some time to throw in his way, the beginner finds a way at last to higher successes. When a man is seen to do well the small matters with which he is occasionally intrusted, he is intrusted with higher ones, and gradually reaches the higher rounds of the professional or business ladder. Not seldom it happens that a lucky accident gives to one who has languished in obscurity an opportunity to exhibit his powers, and lifts him at once from poverty and obscurity to prosperity and eminence. Such was the case with Murray (afterward Lord Mansfield), whose leader in an important law case (that of Theophilus Cibber and Sloper) was seized with a fit in court before the trial came on, and relinquished the defense to the junior counsel. Murray addressed the jury so successfully that business at once poured in upon him, and he said a few years afterward that he knew no interval between no income and three thousand pounds a year. So with the brilliant forensic advocate, Thomas Erskine. Without money or professional or social connections, shabbily dressed, and living on cow-beef, he would prob-

ably, but for a series of fortunate accidents, have been doomed to a long and weary probation on the back benches of the court. A casual remark of his won him a client, and an attack of strangury experienced by one of the senior counsel gave him an opportunity to display his powers, and to pass, by a single giant bound, from want to abundance, — from the Castle of Giant Despair to the Delectable Mountains. Retainer fees rained in upon him, and his income rose at last to £12,000 a year. Sir Samuel Romilly, one of the greatest chancery lawyers of England, made no progress in his profession during seven weary circuits, and bitterly deplored the fact that “a barrister’s not being employed is supposed to proceed from his incapacity, and is alone considered as sufficient evidence that he must have been tried and rejected.” Yet, in spite of this inauspicious beginning, Romilly found at last an opening for his fine abilities, and attained to a success which he had never looked for in his wildest dreams, winning finally an income of from £8,000 to £9,000 a year. Let it be remembered, however, that Murray and Erskine were helped by the lucky accidents we have noted, because they were *prepared to take advantage of them*. Who does not see that a hundred favoring accidents would be of no use to a lawyer who had not by previous study, self-training, and mastery of his profession, prepared himself to profit by them?

Let the neglected neophyte, then, take courage, and “bate not heart or hope.” Let him remember that, except in extreme cases, the want of early employment, irksome as it seems, may be a blessing in disguise. The first half-dozen or more years of his professional career are the time for self-discipline, the

practice of economy, and preparation for the severe strain of after life. Instead of lamenting his fate in being doomed to neglect during this time, he should rejoice, and convert his enforced leisure into a stepping-stone to success. Let him remember that during these years he enjoys the only opportunity for reading, culture, and study which he will ever have. Once absorbed in professional business, with its endless cares, interruptions, and perplexities, he will have no time nor strength for study or self-improvement. Instead, therefore, of sitting idle in his office, and wasting his precious hours in smoking, yawning, and moaning over the public neglect, let him seize and improve the golden opportunity which it affords to master thoroughly the principles and practical details of his profession, and to acquire all the accomplishments which may directly or *indirectly* aid him in its pursuit. Let him do this, if necessary, for five or six years, — strengthening his intellect by hard study, storing the cells of his brain not only with legal, but with ethical, historical, scientific, and other useful knowledge, and, not least of all, acquiring habits of patient and persistent labor, and he may rely upon it, the doors to success, which now seem barred against him forever, will swing open at last, and his rewards will be proportionate to the length of time during which they have been withheld.

CHAPTER XXX

SMALL BEGINNINGS

"It is the law of all organized beings that efficiency presupposes apprenticeship." —HERBERT SPENCER.

IT is related of Washington Allston, that many years after he took rank among the masters of his art, a painting by a young man was brought to him for examination. "What is your opinion of it? Speak freely, I pray you," said the person presenting the picture. Allston declined to grant the request; but, being strongly pressed, he at last replied, after having placed the picture in a variety of positions, "Why, it is a queer thing, a *very* queer thing." "But does it indicate talent?" "Well, then, to deal plainly with you, it is a wretched affair. There is no ground for hope, — not even for hope. Let him give up the idea. He can never make a painter." "It was painted by yourself." "No — impossible!" "It *was*! Look, — there is your name; and here — see! — is the date; only seven years ago, you perceive!"

This example of the humble beginning of a career in which high success was subsequently achieved, is one of thousands which might be cited that are full of encouragement to persons who are just starting in life. The beginner in a professional or business career often distresses himself with the thought that he has no genius or high talent, and therefore, with his utmost

efforts, will never soar above mediocrity. Let him dismiss all such thoughts, and remember that no man knows or can know what is in him, or what time, destiny, or circumstances may bring out of him, till he has tested himself by actual trial. Hardly any eminent man, even of phenomenal genius, contemplated at the outset of his career the elevation to which he rose at last. Cromwell followed little events before he ventured to control great ones; and Napoleon never sighed for the sceptre until he had gained the truncheon, nor dreamed of the imperial diadem until he had first conquered a crown. The biographies of nearly all the most successful men in every calling show that their careers, however brilliant at last, had humble and in many cases insignificant beginnings.

It is said that when Chantry, the celebrated English sculptor, was a schoolboy, a boy sitting near him saw him one day cutting a piece of pine, and asked him what was he doing. "I am cutting out old Fox's head," was the reply. Fox was his schoolmaster, and this was the humble beginning of his life-work. Look at the "Wizard of the North;" could anything have been humbler than the beginning of Scott's career as a romancer, or did he for a moment dream of the world-wide celebrity which he won? Writing a few chapters of a tale, in humble imitation of Miss Edgeworth, he throws it into an old cabinet drawer, — forgets it utterly, — lights upon it accidentally years afterward, when rummaging for fishing tackle, — completes and publishes it. It ("Waverley") proves a hit; 6,000 copies are sold in seven months; he rubs his eyes and discovers that he has talent of which he was hardly conscious; throws off "Guy Mannering" in six weeks, and follows it up with a long succession of romances,

all written in the afternoon of his life, which utterly eclipse the achievements of its morning. Ruskin, when a mere stripling, chances to write a letter to a Review, to prove that an old artist, whom people were laughing at, could really draw trees and clouds; the letter is expanded into a volume ("Modern Painters"); the volume, into five volumes; and the author's reputation is established not only as the most brilliant and masterly art-critic in England, but as a powerful and suggestive writer upon ethics, philosophy, and religion. Charles Dickens engages in his youth to write, at ten guineas a sheet, a burlesque accompaniment to a series of comic woodcuts, illustrating the hackneyed theme of Cockney sports. He is so miserably poor that a couple of numbers are paid for in advance, to enable him to get married. The Nimrod Club of the caricaturist becomes the Pickwick Club; and the Cockney sportsmen, whose spider legs, swallow-tail coats, and absurd mistakes in sportsmanship are expected by artist and publishers to be laughed at for a few weeks and then forgotten, develop into the characters of one of the world's imperishable works of humor and imagination.

Few persons are aware that Rogers's first volume of poems was a small quarto of twenty-six pages, in which there were rivulets of text running through meadows of margin. Could anything have been much less promising than Cooper's first novel? He was reading an English society novel aloud to his wife when he suddenly laid down the book and said, "I believe I could write a better story myself." Challenged to make good his boast, he sat down at his table and wrote out a few pages of a tale which his wife encouraged him to complete. The tale was "Precaution," the plot and execution of which contained little suggestion of

the brilliant romances that followed it. How did Henry Clay acquire his bewitching eloquence? He began by declaiming, day after day for years, in barns, cornfields, and the forest, passages from histories. Sir Robert Peel began delivering speeches and repeating sermons to his father when but ten years old. Nearly all the most celebrated clergymen have begun their ministries in a humble way. Spurgeon began his great work in London by preaching to a very small number of persons. Dr. Guthrie "waited by the pool five long, weary years" after preaching his first sermon, before he got a call as a pastor. Dr. Payson made a very feeble beginning as preacher. Greatly depressed, he "felt thankful it was rainy," and that there were very few people at the meeting. When Arthur Stanley delivered his first discourse at Bergapton his bodily presence, it is said, was weak, his delivery shocking, and the spiritual refreshment in his discourses most meagre. Robert Hall broke down in his first attempt at preaching, and covered his face with his hands, sobbing, "I have lost all my ideas!" Lacordaire, who preached to crowded and admiring congregations at the Notre Dame, Paris, won his celebrity only after repeated failures; and Boileau, the famous French poet, failed in the pulpit after breaking down amid roars of laughter.

So in the legal, mercantile, political, and other professions. A poor clerk at Hamburg in Germany takes his meals at an obscure tavern, and carries home all the waste corks he meets with. After seven or eight years, he sells them for a hundred crowns, and this sum is the basis of the future fortune of M. Ostervald, the rich Paris banker. A beggar boy, Edmund Saunders by name, hangs about the attorneys' offices at Clem-

ent's Inn, London ; is taught to write by a clerk, who has a mock desk made for him at the top of a staircase, becomes a swift copyist and "an exquisite entering clerk ;" is called to the bar, becomes an eminent practitioner, and is finally appointed chief justice of England. A poor dealer in spectacles and magic lanterns at Glasgow, Scotland, finding business dull, spends his leisure moments in taking asunder and remaking all the machines he can come at. A machine in the university collection needs repairing, and he is employed. He makes a new machine, and the steam-engine, the herald of a new force in civilization and of England's industrial supremacy, proclaims the genius of Watt.

An English boy on his way to school picks up a horseshoe, carries it three miles and sells it to a blacksmith for a penny. He scrapes up one day some wasted treacle, and selling it for three halfpence, counts himself rich ; and this is the small beginning of Samuel Budgell's career as one of England's most active and successful traders. A lady offers to a miserably poor boy of eight years in Rochester, N. H., a Testament if he will read it through. Anxious to have a book of his own, he reads it through in eight days, and passes a creditable examination in its contents. At ten he becomes a farmer's apprentice ; toils from daylight to dark till he is twenty-one ; meanwhile reads, chiefly by firelight, and under other disadvantages, more than a thousand borrowed volumes of history, biography, and philosophy ; becomes a shoemaker, then a teacher, and after years of almost incredible hardship and toil, is elected representative in the legislature of Massachusetts. He is next sent to the senate, of which he is twice elected president ; in a few years is elected a senator

of the United States, where, as chairman of the committee on military affairs, he performs in one session, according to General Scott, more work than all the chairmen of the military committees in twenty-three years before. After serving in the Senate eighteen years, he is elected Vice-President of the United States. Such was the bitter struggle, ending in final victory, of a poor farm-laborer's son (Jeremiah Jones Colbaith, whose name was changed in youth to Henry Wilson), with "those twin gaolers of the human heart, low birth and narrow fortune." Not less humble was the beginning of a missionary work among the poor whose extent and success are among the marvels of modern times. It was in an old shanty which had been a drinking saloon, but which was so rickety that it had been abandoned even for that disreputable purpose, that with a few tallow candles around him D. L. Moody initiated his noble mission, by trying to teach a negro boy the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Such has been the small and seemingly insignificant beginning of almost all great careers. The truest successes in life are not won by a single bold stroke, but men grow into them from humble outsets by a slow and sure unfolding of capacity and power. "Every occupation, even the meanest, which adds anything to the capital of mankind," says the historian Froude, "if followed assiduously, with a desire to understand everything connected with it, is an ascending stair whose summit is nowhere, and from the successive steps of which the horizon of knowledge perpetually enlarges." Begin your web, says an old adage, and God will provide you with thread.

Often the greatest misfortune, almost, which can befall a young man is a seemingly auspicious begin-

ning of his career,— the very thing which he and his friends regard as a piece of exceeding good luck. An easy, cheap success is the bane of many a life. What is the object of a true life? It is not to win money or fame, but to build up a noble manhood. This can be achieved, not by spasmodic efforts, but by long-continued and strenuous struggles that train the patience and strengthen the endurance of a man. No matter how brilliant one's abilities, he should master the knowledge of his profession leisurely, and not under extreme pressure. Nothing can be more fatal to high and permanent success than for a young lawyer or physician to have the responsibilities of a large practice thrust upon him at the very start. Young men who are so unfortunate as to be the special favorites of fortune, usually begin life at the top of the ladder, and descend round by round to the bottom. The true method of professional or business life is the very opposite of this; it is the method of nature. All her great productions have the most insignificant beginnings.

The river which, as it rolls onward its mighty flood of waters to the ocean, bears navies on its bosom and propels engines of enormous power, was in its small beginnings but an oozing rill, winding like a silver thread along the green carpet of some secluded valley, and wafting only the stricken leaflet that had dropped on its waters. The tree that shades the mountain's side with its foliage, and whose giant branches mock at the howlings of the blast, was in its small beginning but a tiny seed, trampled under foot and disregarded, then a small shoot which the leaping hare might forever have crushed. As Herbert Spencer has strikingly shown, throughout the realm of nature

it is the law of all organized beings that efficiency presupposes apprenticeship. Not only is it true, he tells us, that in the development of the intellect there must come first the perceptions of identity and duality, next of number, and that without these arithmetic, algebra, and the infinitesimal calculus become impracticable, but it is true that there is no part of any organism whatever but begins in some simple form, and passes to its final stage through successive phases of complexity. Every heart is at first a mere pulsatile sack; every brain begins as a slight enlargement of the spinal cord. So with worldly success. In every calling, from that of the farmer or mechanic to that of the merchant, the lawyer, or the statesman, efficiency in small employments is the surest guarantee of mastery in great ones. Those beginners are most likely to succeed who are content at first to be beginners,—to start at the foot of the ladder and climb round after round to the top. The way to be a successful innkeeper is to begin as waiter. The way to become a great merchant is to begin by sweeping a store and carrying letters to the post. Biography teems with illustrations of this. The so-called “lucky man” is he who has begun with little things, and by a patience which never yielded to disappointments, to hope deferred, to disaster, has moved on from one point of achievement to another, meeting each crisis or opportunity with a fresh accession of power, each new duty with a broader outlook on the work to be done. In short, his career, in the connection of its inception with its close, is like the slim kite-string which engineers threw across the Niagara River, tying that to a wire, and adding strand to strand, until there sprang across the deep chasm a solid transit path,

thundering with traffic, and forming the highway of the nations.

Exceptions there are, of course, to this law of success, as to any other rule; there are Pitts, who leap at once to the topmost round,—men who seem never to have been boys, but made or cast. But the world sees but one Pitt in a century; the million in the race of life must reach the goal by single steps, not by a few gigantic bounds. The advice which Mr. Kirby, the eminent founder of the Dublin Medical School, gave some years ago to a young surgeon who asked his advice about the best method of securing success in his profession, is applicable in its spirit to every calling: “My friend, go and attend with all due care and diligence a sweep. That sweep when cured will get you another sweep as a patient; this latter will get you the kitchen maid; the kitchen maid will get you the cook; the cook will get you the lady’s maid, and the lady’s maid, in the plenitude of her gratitude, will get you *the lady herself*, and thus you will culminate and cap the climax.”

Astor, Peabody, Carnegie, Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, and hundreds of other immensely rich men, became such from the humblest beginnings by patient diligence and attention to the minutest matters of expense and profit. Knowing that a few cents saved each day will make dollars in the course of a month and eagles in the course of a year, they practiced the most rigid economy and barred out all the impulses which might take money from their purse in small amounts. From cents they ascended to dollars, from dollars to hundreds, from hundreds to thousands and millions. Had they despised small beginnings, had they not haggled and chaffered for pennies, had they said to them-

selves, "It is too paltry a business, this saving of sixpences — I cannot submit to such meanness," they never would have accumulated millions or used money as an Archimedean lever by which to move the fiscal world.

So, in the acquisition of knowledge and of learning — in the ministerial, legal, and medical professions — the most brilliant successes have sprung from the humblest beginnings. Some fifty years ago John P. Hale stated in a lecture at Cleveland, Ohio, that a few days before, in Boston, he had been introduced into a large room so filled with books that there was not enough vacant space for a "New England Primer." A lady asked him if he would like to see the nucleus of the collection, and upon his saying that he would, showed him a Latin dictionary, purchased by the owner when a boy with money obtained by the sale of blueberries. The owner, a farmer's son, was a scholar familiar with ancient and modern languages, known as Theodore Parker. Heyne, the great classical scholar, began his studies in a way humbler even than that of Parker. The child of wretchedly poor parents, he suffered for thirty years, as few eminent men have ever suffered, from poverty and obscurity; but by dint of pluck and persistence he triumphed over every obstacle, became a professor at the University of Göttingen, and did invaluable service to the cause of sound learning by his critical editions of Virgil and other ancient classics.

Whatever, then, may be a young man's calling, let him not despise or be discouraged by small beginnings. It is the law of the universe that great things shall be made up of littles. Neither in the material nor in the moral world are great and sudden leaps

often observable. Every advance in the general must be made by advances in the particular. The grass does not spring up full-grown; the trees and the grain do not leap forth suddenly into maturity; but they all climb upward by little and little, the increments being so minute as to be imperceptible. The planets, again, do not leap from end to end of their orbits, or accomplish their revolutions by giant bounds and springs, but circle the heavens by rolling through successive yards and roods of the sky. Intellect, feeling, habit, character, are all formed in the same way. All this, obvious as it seems, young men are too apt to overlook, and consequently to lose heart by ever and anon contemplating the appalling disproportion between their first petty achievements and the vastness of the objects they would attain. But let them remember that, as the greatest edifices are built by laying one brick upon another, and as the most distant goal is reached by continuing to take but one step at a time, so the greatest results may be attained in any calling or profession by littles done well through a long series of years. But one must have faith, self-confidence, and elastic hopefulness to achieve any great thing; and nothing is more disheartening, as nothing is more foolish, than for the toiler to be always comparing a single stroke of the chisel with the monument to be raised, or a solitary impression of the spade with the mountain to be leveled.

It is related of the illustrious Italian composer of music, Porpora, that, feeling a strong attachment to a pupil of his, he asked him one day whether he thought he had courage enough to travel constantly the road which his teacher might trace out for him, however wearisome it might prove to be. On receiving an

affirmative reply, Porpora wrote down upon a piece of ruled paper the diatonic and chromatic scales, both ascending and descending, skips of thirds, fourths, fifths, etc., to teach him to master the intervals and sustain the sound, besides shakes, groups, *appoggiaturi*, and other vocal exercises of various kinds. This one sheet of paper, it is said, furnished both master and pupil occupation for a year. The pupil began to murmur, but was reminded of his promise. The fourth year passed, the fifth also, and still there was the same eternal, relentless sheet of paper. Even during the sixth year it was not abandoned, although lessons in articulation, pronunciation, and declamation were added. At the end of the year, the pupil, who thought he had been engaged only with the elements of the vocal art, was surprised to hear his master say, "There, my dear boy, you have nothing more to learn; *you are the first singer in Italy.*" Porpora spoke the truth, for that singer was Caffarelli.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE VALUE OF CHARACTER

“Character is a perfectly educated will.” — NOVALIS.

“There is one thing in this world better than making a living, and that is making a life.” — GOVERNOR W. E. RUSSELL.

ONE of the most important acquisitions — indeed, the most important one — to which a young man can direct his attention, is character, which secretly, silently, but effectually, governs the world. The thoughts and acts of the wise and just man, it has been truly said, influence society just as the observatory clock governs the dropping of the ball, and thereby the sailing of the ship over all the ocean. A great moral truth, dropped at the right time and in the right place into a young man's mind, is a chronometer for all the voyage of life. In the midst of apprehended dangers, breakers, and quicksands, it indicates to him his true longitude, and he, imparting the truth to others, enables them to steer their barks safely amid darkness and storm. Character may be defined as the result in public sentiment of that which has been observed and noted of the conduct of any member of a community. Simplicity, straightforwardness, and integrity are some of its chief elements, which will always pay best in the long run. The man of tricks, devices, and expedients is never long successful, and never so near ruin as when he seems to have

attained some brilliant success ; for the happy issue of one set of devices overturns a hundred others. "Life is constantly weighing us in very sensitive scales," says Lowell, "and telling every one of us precisely what his real weight is, to the last grain of dust." The public may be deceived for a while in its estimate of its members ; but in the long run it is rarely mistaken, and its estimate is vitally important to the individual concerned. Oliver Cromwell, one of the most sagacious of men, once said to a clever but unscrupulous lawyer of his day, "I understand that you have of late been vastly wary in your conduct. Do not be too confident in this ; subtlety may deceive you, integrity never will."

Even Lord Chesterfield, the crowned king and hierophant of fashion, whose letters to his son have been denounced for their low standard of morality, wrote to him thus : "There is nothing so delicate as your moral character, and nothing which it is so much your interest to preserve pure. A strange concurrence of circumstances has sometimes raised very bad men to high stations ; but they have been raised like criminals to a pillory, where their persons and their crimes, by being more conspicuous, were only the more known, the more detested, and the more pelted and insulted. I recommend to you a most scrupulous tenderness for your moral character, and the utmost care not to say or do anything that may ever so slightly taint it. Show yourself on all occasions the advocate, the friend, not the bully, of virtue." Men of character have been termed the conscience of society. In every well-governed state they are also its best motive power ; for it is moral qualities which in the main rule the world. Even in war, Napoleon said, the moral is to

physical as ten to one. All the laws and institutions of society are but the outgrowth of character. All the great moral revolutions of the world — from which it has reaped a hundredfold more benefit than from science and art — have been due to character.

Young men are sometimes led, by the temporary triumphs of unprincipled men, to underrate the value of that priceless possession. They see the sharper and the trickster crowned with honor, and the swindler rolling in wealth. They see the time-server, the trimmer, the liar, the demagogue, not only hoodwinking the public and managing to keep out of the clutches of the law, but winning the prizes due to the upright. But let it be remembered that these successes are but short-lived; that the culprit, from the moment his crime is committed, loses his tranquillity of mind and is pursued by a secret uneasiness and self-reproach; and that perfect integrity is at a premium even among knaves. There are some trusts which knaves will never confer on each other, and which they will confide to true men. "Get a character," was the advice of a wealthy scoundrel to one of his less fortunate fellows, who asked him to point out a good method of making money. Chesterfield, in the letter which we quoted, says of Colonel Chartrez, "the most notorious blasted rascal in the world," who, by all sorts of crimes, had amassed immense wealth, "He was so sensible of the disadvantage of a bad character, that I once heard him say that, though he would not give one farthing for virtue, he would give ten thousand pounds for a character, because he could get a hundred thousand pounds by it, — whereas he was so blasted that he no longer had an opportunity of cheating people."

No man, by the most cunning contrivance, can suc-

ceed long in passing for more than he is worth. Ralph Waldo Emerson never uttered a truer sentiment than when he wrote: "The world is full of judgment days, and in every assemblage that a man enters, in every action he attempts, he is gauged and stamped. In every troop of boys that whoop and run in each yard or square, a newcomer is well and accurately weighed in the course of a few days and stamped with the right number, as if he had undergone a formal trial of his strength, speed, and temper."

In all professions and callings, it is not intellect that is demanded for success so much as character; not so much genius as self-control, patience, and judgment. Hence it is that some men exert an influence out of all proportion to their mental endowments. They seem to sway men by some latent talismanic power, — by a secret reserved force which acts like magnetism. Their very names stir us like the sound of a trumpet. Luther was at first an obscure monk; but how his words rang through Germany! It was said of the Caliph Omar, that his walking stick struck more terror into those who saw it than another man's sword. What talismans — what magical powers — were the names of Cæsar, William the Silent, the Scotch Douglas, and Henry IV. of France! How quickly when Lord Chatham became prime minister of England, was his intense, fiery energy felt thrilling through every branch of the public service!

In all kinds of business and in the conduct of life generally, it is not brain or worldly shrewdness that tells so much as weight of character; not brilliant abilities so much as self-mastery, patience, persistence, and integrity. As it is the edge of the axe that does the cutting, but the whole mass back of the edge that

drives the axe home and makes it effective, so it is the moral qualities, the whole mass of character, that make talent tell in the mart, the senate, the forum, and the exchange.

It is said that no greater homage was ever paid in the British Parliament to any one of its deceased members than was paid to the Scotchman, Francis Horner, who was neither rich nor eloquent, neither fascinating in his manners nor endowed with more than mediocre abilities. To what, then, was the universal respect for him due? Simply to the force of his character, not inborn, but "formed," says Lord Cockburn, "out of no peculiarly fine elements, by himself. Horner was born to show what moderate powers, aided only by culture and goodness, may achieve, even amidst the competition and jealousy of public life." Dr. Franklin attributed his own success in public life not to his mental gifts or ability as a speaker, — for these were mediocre, — but to his well-known integrity of character. It was this that gave him so much weight with his fellow-citizens. "I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language; and yet I generally carried my point." When George Washington took command of the American army in the struggle for independence, his countrymen felt that its strength had been doubled. It was not his military genius that inspired this confidence; for, though he was a man of sterling sense, and "sagacious by a light which came from integrity," he was not a man of genius in any sense, but won public confidence by his high integrity and truthfulness, and by making duty his watchword in every hour of his life. He felt as did Lord Macaulay long

afterward, when he offended the electors of Edinburgh and lost his seat in the House of Commons. "It is not necessary to my happiness," he nobly wrote to a friend, "to sit in Parliament; but it is necessary to my happiness that I should possess, in Parliament or out of Parliament, the consciousness of having done what was right."

Character is property, and property of an inestimable kind. In all kinds of business, character is as efficient as capital, and will often supply its place. When capital has been lost, no man, if character remains, can be considered bankrupt. That will enable him to reconstruct the most dilapidated fortune. Young men in business, who complain of the slowness of their progress and the slenderness of their gains, do not sufficiently consider in their balance-sheet of profits that if they have maintained, amid all inducements to crookedness, an unswerving rectitude, they have all the while been gaining character, more valuable than money, and thus adding year by year a rung to the ladder that leads to position and fortune. When the worldly possessions of a man of integrity have been swept away, he is said to be "wrecked," when, in fact, with his character preserved, he still has a cork jacket with which to keep himself afloat. When, by the great Chicago fire, thousands of merchants were stripped of all their worldly possessions, how was it that they were enabled, without delay, to embark in business anew? It was their character — their record for integrity, which the flames could not destroy — that won them credit. "The books of the commercial agencies," says an excellent writer, "showed that they were men of truth and honesty; . . . that they had always paid one hundred cents on

the dollar, and that record was as good as a bank deposit. They drew on their character."

Some sixty years ago, Nicholas Biddle, the famous president of the United States Bank, dismissed a clerk because he refused to do some writing on Sunday. The young man, whose mother depended on him for her subsistence, was thus thrown out of employment by his obedience to the voice of conscience. A few days afterwards Mr. Biddle, being asked to name a cashier for another bank, recommended the very same young man, and mentioned as a proof of his trustworthiness the fact that "he would n't work for me on Sunday." Honesty does not always "pay" financially at once; it sometimes exacts a sacrifice; but in the long run it always pays, both in the lowest and in the highest sense of the word.

To what was due the wonderful efficiency of Cromwell's regiment of "Ironsides," before whom the king's cavaliers went down like grass before the mower's scythe, but to the fact that the Puritans were men of character — God-fearing men, who knew no other fear? It was said of the brilliant and versatile Richard Brinsley Sheridan that had his character been trustworthy he might have ruled the world. The lack of one quality made all his splendid gifts comparatively useless. Why was it that the life of the Dominican friar, Lacordaire, who drew such crowds to hear his fiery discourses at Notre Dame, — who was a man of genius, and able to give that genius eloquent expression and effect, — was such a failure? Why did he die prematurely, a heart-broken, disappointed, and disconsolate man? The secret of his sorrows was that he yearned for *éclat*; that his motive power was vanity and love of applause; that he lacked

moral earnestness and unity of aim. Actor, lawyer, priest, monk, and legislator by turns, he tried profession after profession, swept every chord, struck every string; but whether in the advocate's gown or in the white flannel of the friar, — in the pulpit, at the bar, or in the Academy, — he sought solely to glorify himself, and, failing to receive the praise he craved, he died a disappointed and wretched man. Much like this was the career of the brilliant, dazzling Benjamin Constant, who, panting for high distinction, yet *blasé* at twenty, gambled habitually while writing a work on religion, lost all faith in virtue, and died of misery and ennui, a prematurely exhausted and wretched man.

Reader, take the word of an old man who has seen much of life, and drunk deeply of its joys and sorrows, that the most priceless of earthly possessions, and one which thieves cannot steal, is character, — character made up of high-mindedness, honor, purity, and integrity, which is woven at first of the consistence of gossamer, but gradually strengthens to the texture of silk — of leather — of steel.

CHAPTER XXXII

FIND OUT YOUR WEAK POINTS

“A wise questioning is the half of knowledge.”

It is a well-known practice of successful shopkeepers, once or twice a year, to take an exact account of their stock of goods. They do this in order to know in what things they are deficient, of what they may have an excess, and what have been their profits or losses during the past six or twelve months. The practice is one which may wisely be imitated by beginners in every calling or career. Every aspirant to success should, from time to time, take account of himself, of his abilities and disabilities, of his strong points and his weak ones, of his mental and moral gifts and acquisitions, and of his mental and moral deficiencies. He should make a careful inventory of these, that he may know of just what he is capable, and not waste his time and strength in striving for things beyond his grasp; that he may do just the work that nature intended him to do, and that he may strive, so far as possible, to strengthen his feeble faculties, and to remedy his defects.

Of all knowledges, men are most deficient in self-knowledge. Socrates used to say that if any crier should make proclamation in the theatre, “Stand up, cobblers!” “Stand up, weavers!” etc., only those named would do so; but if the order were, “Stand

up, men of sense!" not a man would remain sitting. We are too likely to forget that it is by our chief weakness that our actual strength is apt to be determined, as the strength of a chain is measured by that of its weakest link. Achilles was invulnerable in every part of his body save his heel; but it was just there that the wound was inflicted that caused his death. A ship may brave storms and icebergs triumphantly, only to founder in a calm through holes bored by tiny insects. "Remedy your deficiencies," says Bulwer, "and your merits will take care of themselves. Every man has in him good and evil. His good is his valiant army; his evil is his corrupt commissariat. Reform the commissariat, and the army will do its duty."

It is not the lack of talents, or the possession of some glaring fault, that usually prevents a youth from obtaining a position, or from rising to higher and higher ones, but some comparatively petty but offensive fault or defect, which, before it became a rooted habit, might easily have been avoided. A habit of heedlessness or inattention, of absent-mindedness or "wool-gathering," of carelessness or untidiness in one's dress; a lack of courtesy or punctuality or alertness; a slouchy gait, — traits unconsciously acquired, and of which the possessor is entirely ignorant, — may prove an insuperable barrier to success. Even so petty a thing as shyness or awkwardness, an indisposition to look an employer in the face, a frequent gaze at the clock, as if one were waiting impatiently the hour of his release from service, an attachment to a cigarette may jeopardize a youth's position in a business house or doom him to a low and obscure place. Every employer gives the preference to a boy

who steps briskly, speaks decidedly, is deferential without cringing, works readily when needed beyond the stated hour, and manifests an eager interest in his employer's business. There are leading clerks in great houses who, by their shrewdness, tact, personal magnetism, and gracious, winning manners, have made themselves indispensable to their employers, who know that, should they attach themselves to rival houses, they would transfer to them a large amount of custom.

It is easy to underrate or scoff at the qualities we have named as "trifles;" but trifles make up the aggregate of life, and many a man's plans of worldly success have been helped or blasted by them. It was but a few years ago that the choice of an ill-considered epithet caused the fall of a powerful minister in Italy, and that another such deprived a brilliant member of the British House of Commons of a reelection to that body. "The turn of a sentence," says Jeremy Bentham, "has decided many a friendship, and, for aught we know, the fate of many a kingdom."

A severe and searching self-examination — a probing to the quick of all one's faults and weaknesses — is anything but pleasant, and many who begin the work speedily find it so painful that they revolt and turn away from it altogether. But is it not better to endure the pain now than to suffer from defeat and disaster at a later day? "When the construction of a bridge or a battleship has proceeded to a certain point," says a recent writer, "the work has to be tested. Some of the appliances used for testing the strength of the steel are cruel-looking machines. They bore and twist and grind, and put the material that is being tested under hydraulic pressure sufficient to pulverize a dia-

mond. But it is better to have a flaw or a weakness detected then than when the bridge is weighted with a surging mass of humanity, or the ship is straining in a storm at mid-ocean."

We would say, then, to every young man who would make his way in the world or who would make the most of his powers, *Study yourself*. Make an accurate measurement of your powers. Strive, especially, to learn your *idiosyncrasies*. "Are you an acute man, and do you see sharply at short distances, or are you a comprehensive man, and able to take wide and extensive views into your mind? Does your mind turn its ideas into wit, or are you apt to take a comprehensive view of the objects presented to you? Have you an exuberant imagination or a correct judgment? Are you quick or slow—accurate or hasty—a great reader or a great thinker? It is a prodigious point gained if a man can find out where his powers lie, and what are his deficiencies; if he can contrive to ascertain what Nature intended him for; and such are the chances and changes of the world, and so difficult is it to ascertain our own understandings or those of others, that most things are done by persons who could have done other things better."

It is in youth, at the threshold of life, that one should examine himself, and ascertain his faults and weaknesses, because it is in youth only that it will be possible to ascertain them fully and to perform the requisite moral surgery. Every man can then learn his constitutional bias, to what ideas and actions he is predisposed,—whether he is disposed by temperament to be active or indolent, prudent or rash, self-reliant or self-distrustful, thrifty or wasteful. Later in life, when he has fallen under the despotism of one

ruling passion, his introversion will be obscured, his conscience deafened to its own first alarms, and his intellect fertile and skillful in excuses to justify his errors.

Self-examination — the probing of one's mental and moral anatomy — if thorough, is not apt to be a pleasant process; but, if it disturbs our fancied repose, we are more than compensated by the real repose it gives instead. By revealing certain organic defects and certain corresponding powers, it makes us both humble and hopeful. If it shows that our strength has its weak side, it shows also that our weaknesses have a strength hidden in them — that if we have "the defects of our qualities," we have also the qualities of our defects. By disclosing our vulnerable points, it shows where to be on our guard, and where to fortify our characters. The most fatally ignorant man is the man who, however great his other knowledges, does not know himself. In the battle of life he breaks down when he is most confident. "A life without cross-examination is no life at all."

CHAPTER XXXIII

WORKING BY RULE

“There is no course of life so weak and sottish as that which is carried on by method and discipline.” — MONTAIGNE.

AMONG the virtues which moralists and writers of books for young men are fond of extolling are method, order, and regularity in one's work. In all departments of business these virtues are, no doubt, generally essential to success. It helps the reputation of a merchant to have it known that he invariably takes his seat in his office as the clock strikes nine or ten; that his letters are always answered by return of mail, and his checks drawn at a certain hour on a given settling-day. There are some spheres of labor in which an orderly and clock-like life procedure is of vital necessity. There are departments of art which imperatively demand that a certain amount of work shall be done in a given time. But how is it in literature? Is it of equal advantage to the worker here to be methodical and regular; and does the world think more highly of him for these traits? Nay, the very reverse is the fact; and why? Because the instincts of the public tell it that regularity, if not incompatible with, is rarely the accompaniment of, literary power. It knows that, in the vast majority of cases, genius is irregular, occasional, subject to fits and moods, to tidal ebb and flow; now depressed, now exultant; always

apt to fret and chafe in traces, to rebel against rule, to refuse to work by the clock and at set times and places, or to turn out a fixed amount of work per day or per hour.

Mrs. Oliphant, in an essay on Anthony Trollope, written some seventeen years ago, complained bitterly of this notion. "In every other craft," she wrote, "however dependent on the higher gifts, the close and constant labor of the workman is put to the credit of his work. Not even the printer . . . is expected to wait for special inspiration, or damned with faint praise as 'industrious' and 'meritorious,' because he works a certain number of hours a day. But this is still the familiar thing to say of Mr. Trollope." This is true; it is useless to deny it; but was there not abundant reason for the saying? Mr. Trollope was the most methodical romancer, probably, that ever lived. Beginning his work on every week-day in the year at five or half-past five in the morning, and holding that it is an affectation for a professional author to talk of being *en verve* — that is to say, in the proper vein or mood for his work — he sat down to write morning after morning, as, to use his own words, "a cobbler sits down to make shoes." He was no believer in inspiration, forthcoming one morning and withheld from an author on another; and as for the "divine afflatus" of the poet or prose writer, they had no more to do with it, in his opinion, than a cow with conic sections.

When Mr. Trollope heard it said that an author should wait before writing till inspiration moves him, he was hardly able to repress his scorn. "To me," he said, "it would not be more absurd if the shoemaker were to wait for inspiration, or the tallow-

chandler for the divine moment of melting." He held that any one who could write at all could, if he chose, get into the habit of settling down into his armchair at a regular hour in the morning, and — provided that he had not eaten too many good things, or smoked more cigars than were good for him the night before — turn out a pretty uniform amount of work by a given hour in the afternoon. This theory affected Mr. Trollope's work, and it affected the world's estimate of it. Though he produced more than fifty novels, besides not a few other works, he left little that will live. There are few scenes or characters in his romances that stamp themselves indelibly in the memory, and of verbal felicities there are almost none whatever.

That the knowledge of his rule of working with clockwork regularity just so many hours a day, and of writing exactly one thousand words an hour, having every word counted as he wrote, should lower the estimate of his work by his literary brethren, was perfectly natural. It is not mere whim or affectation, as many persons suppose, which influences the conduct of many brain-workers, — novelists, essayists, poets, musical composers, etc., — when they yield to fits of idleness and seeming mental vacuity. No doubt a writer may needlessly abandon himself to this sort of thing, and subject himself thereby to misery and impoverishment. But the disposition of literary men to work by fits and starts has its basis in mental experience, which nothing but a complete knowledge of the mysterious processes of the brain would enable us to understand.

It is a fact familiar to mental toilers the world over that there are hours and days when work is easy, thought spontaneous, ideas "nimble and airy servi-

tors," and the clothing them with words a delight; and on the other hand, that there are seasons — alas! too frequent — when the mental atmosphere is filled with mist and fog, and writing is a dreary, treadmill task; and though it is possible to whip up the lagging energies, and to go on by spurts, one will try in vain to equalize his work and to write with continuous power.

We are apt to think of the poet Longfellow as less subject to moods of inspiration and depression than other bards; yet we find him long baffled in his attempts to write a poem introductory to "The Estray," a companion to "The Waif," — a collection of exquisite selected poems, published in 1845, — and thus writing in his journal: "For years I have not had so unpoetic an autumn, which grieves me sore. I always rely on the autumn, and chiefly on October. Last year how many poems I wrote! And this year — not one." It is because most writers, though differing in the frequency and degrees of their moods of elevation and depression — their periods of fertility and of barrenness — are so conscious of the existence of these moods, that they infer that a man who harnesses his Pegasus invariably day by day as the clock strikes a certain hour, and plies the whip for a fixed number of hours, must produce much that is commonplace.

The qualities which relate to the proper management of time, such as punctuality or the avoidance of loitering, and the power of working up spare minutes for useful purposes, all conduce to success. They enable a man to do his work in a triumphant manner; but they do not determine his destiny in life. That which determines this is indicated, though vaguely, by such terms as genius, capacity, mental stature, and the like. It has been justly observed by a thoughtful

writer, that it is impossible to say precisely what the difference is between a large and a small minded man ; but the fact is unquestionable that there is such a difference, and that it can no more be removed by any training whatever than the difference between an oak and an elm. Some men have more and wiser thoughts and stronger impulses, as others have larger bones and harder muscles, than their neighbors ; but the promptness with which they use their powers, and apply them to the details of the various subjects that come before them, does not appear to bear any assignable relation to this distinction.

“A wise and even a clever man may be dilatory and slovenly, just as a strong man may be clumsy or may stammer. . . . The minor virtues are useful in practical life, though even there they frequently degenerate into priggishness, and lead people to suppose that the tool, and not the hand or the mind which guides the hand, does the work ; but in matters of thought, speculation, and literature, the exception to their utility is wider. The power of concentrating the mind on a given subject for a given time, finishing it off, and turning to something else, is a great gift ; but the man who loiters and dawdles and turns aside to other things, has a few set-offs. The mind is not a mere machine, and it cannot be used as if it were one. Our thoughts neither are nor ought to be entirely in our own control. At least, if a man chooses to tyrannize over himself, he must take the consequence. He will miss much that would otherwise have occurred to him. He will think and feel less deeply and less comprehensively than he would have felt.”¹

¹ *Essays*, by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen. Reprinted from the *Saturday Review*.

Will the reader, in opposition to these views, cite the cases of Goethe and Scott, who were men of great genius, and yet steady, methodical, indefatigable workers? Seemingly exceptions to the general rule, their literary histories only confirm it. It was *not* the methodical, scientifically calm Goethe that wrote the first and divinest part of "Faust;" it *was* he that wrote the second part of "Faust," which is immeasurably inferior. It was Scott's practice of working doggedly at his romances in certain hours, whether in the vein or out of the vein, that caused the glaring inequalities in his work. As an acute critic observes, "He frankly informs us that when he produced those parts of his works that sent the public wild with delight, and which even the critic dunces who pestered him with their rules admitted to be his best, he had not been thinking of rule or method at all, but had been run away with by irresistible, boyish delight in some Nicol Jarvie or Dugald Dalgetty or Jonathan Oldbuck, out of whose company he could not tear himself, let the story run as it might." "We may pronounce it one of the surest facts on which to base a science of criticism," says Peter Bayne, "that the artist, literary or pictorial, who is always master of his genius has little genius of which to be master."

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE EVILS OF HURRY

“Climb not too fast Life’s ladder,—first of all
Push deep your roots, then you can well sustain
The rays of sunlight that upon you fall,
The hours of toil, the pangs of passing pain.”

ROBERT MACKAY.

“Haste is of the devil.”—KORAN.

ONE of the crying evils of our times is the hurry in which men live. The age is one of stimulus and high pressure, of keen competition and fierce struggle in every sphere of business; and men live as if they thought the powers of the human system were inexhaustible. Houses are built in haste and hurried to completion, the result of which is rickety walls, gaping crevices, and shaky foundations — sometimes the loss of human life. Books are written in haste, to meet an impatient demand, are swiftly skimmed over, cast aside, and forgotten. When Thomas Gray first published his poems, including the exquisite and immortal “Elegy,” they were so brief and so few, that to swell out his volume to a decent size, he was obliged to leave every other page blank; yet he had spent years of toil in its composition, polishing and repolishing each line with almost ceaseless care. To-day a bulky book of biography, history, or travels is “rushed up” in six months, devoured in a few sittings, and flung into Lethe’s stream. Society craves its “new number of

something" to appear incessantly, and one subject of thought succeeds another faster than wave follows wave.

Men travel for pleasure at fifty miles an hour, and hurrying to Europe by ocean greyhounds, are hustled through fine scenery, picture galleries, and museums, as if the amount of labor they undergo were regarded as the measure of their enjoyment. A recent essayist declares that he could be well content to live upon the road, instead of getting on at the present rate, and being impatient to arrive at some town, only, perhaps, to be equally restless when arrived there. Not that he was insensible to the pleasure of driving fast, stirring the blood as it does, and giving a sense of power; but everything seemed to be getting a little too hasty and business-like, *as though we were to be eternally getting on*, and never realizing anything but fidget and money,—the means instead of the end. When shall we learn that as the richest and mellowest of fruits are not the sudden result of a day's forced and unnatural growth, but in the luscious morsel which tempts the palate we can almost detect the breath of the zephyr, the gentle benediction of the dew, the caressing of the summer breeze, the kisses of the sun, and all the nameless influences which have nursed it into ripe perfection, so the rarest human products are never the result of haste, are never forced, but like the autumn fruitage, are the outcome of a thousand mysterious influences, which have slowly brought them forth?

One of the first and most important lessons which a young man needs to learn in this age of stimulus and high pressure — when men are scourged by a merciless activity which will not let them rest — is the necessity

of waiting. It is said that fifty feet of the Bunker Hill monument are under ground. It is this deep and solid foundation, unseen by those that gaze on the historic shaft, which enables it to stand upright, true to the plumb line, amid all the tempests that rage against its granite ribs. It is the same with every life that one wishes to make eminently successful; many years of it must be spent in laying foundations under ground. What Longfellow says of an author is true of every other professional man: his secret studies are the sunken piers upon which is to rest the bridge of his fame, spanning the dark waters of oblivion. They are out of sight; but without them no structure can stand secure. In the last line of his beautiful "Tales of a Wayside Inn" the same poet points the moral of his story with the sentiment, —

"All things come round to him who will but wait,"

a lesson that needs to be pondered by the Hotspurs of this generation.

That sagacious thinker, Mr. Bagehot, has well observed in his "Physics and Politics," that "to act rightly in modern society requires a great deal of previous study, a great deal of assimilated information, a great deal of sharpened penetration, and these prerequisites of sound action require much time, and, I was going to say, much 'lying in the sun,' a long period of mere passiveness. Even the art of killing one another, which at first particularly trained men to be quick, now requires them to be slow. A hasty general is the worst of generals nowadays; the best is a sort of Von Moltke, who is passive, if ever man was passive; who is silent in seven languages; who possesses more and better accumulated information as to the best way

of killing people than any other man that ever lived. This man plays a restrained and considerate game of chess with his enemy." A confirmation of this is seen in various incidents of the Franco-Prussian War, one of which was that the French *chasse-pot* was found greatly superior to the German gun, but its superiority was neutralized by the impulsive and hasty firing of the French. It is said that in the war of the American Revolution the American soldiers did more execution than the British, because they reserved their fire till they could distinctly see the enemy, and take deliberate aim.

It has been justly said that the person whose movements are always regular, measured, unvarying, not necessarily slow, but never taken at a faster pace than can be maintained throughout—reminding you of the steady, never accelerating movement of a great engine's eccentric beam—is the one who must always come off a winner in the end. "No haste there makes an uncertain motion, occasions loss, or failure, or imperfection. . . . Point after point is reached as surely as the tide swells in the bay, and covers ledge after ledge. What the hand reaches, that it closes over; nothing is slurred, nothing forgotten, nothing overlooked, and, be the end small or great, it is attained, for nothing has been undertaken for which the time calculated, and the movement allowed, were not sufficient."

John Wesley, who was one of the busiest men even in extreme old age, said of himself, "Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry." Dr. Franklin counseled everybody "to take time for all things; great haste makes great wear." It is never healthful to be hurried. Locomotives sometimes run for short

distances a mile or more in a minute ; but they cannot often do so for long distances without coming to grief. It is notorious that express railway stock endures for a much shorter time than that used for slower traffic. The law is almost universal that intensity and duration of action are inversely proportional. Man's nervous system is no exception to the law. Thousands of men, in their anxiety and hot haste to get rich, are ruined every year. The men who do things slowly, deliberately, maturely are the ones who, in the great majority of cases, succeed in life, and who extract the largest enjoyment from it. Slow men seldom tumble down stairs, fall into the water, knock their heads against a post, are killed by an electric car, or die of heart-failure. Those persons live longest who are calm and self-possessed ; whose actions are measured ; who embark in no enterprise without sleeping over it ; who have no exhausting passions, and feed on no exciting food ; who exercise their bodies sufficiently, but not violently nor laboriously, secure an abundance of sleep, and keep clear of all kinds of gambling and schemes for becoming suddenly rich.

A great deal of what is called "overwork" is rather work done in a hurry, because the time appropriated to it has been wasted or misapplied. Hurry to catch a railway train usually implies that one has started too late. The higher salubrity of rural over city life is due not wholly to fresh air and exercise, but in part to the fact that the former involves leisure and pauses in work, which are indispensable to the maintenance of the nervous system in a state of due nutrition. Work and worry are apt to be closely connected, and, if done at high pressure, an excess of the former

speedily entails an increase in the latter, with all the ills, physical and moral, which it generates. It is constant tension and severe strain, with the impatience and solicitude which accompany haste, that age men rapidly, and hurry multitudes to their graves years before their natural time. In a multitude of cases heart and brain, which were given to last seventy or more years, wear out in half as many. We have our exhausted men of twenty-five and our old men of forty.

Let every young man, then, who would live a life of usefulness and happiness, check any disposition he finds in himself to hurry and overtask himself, in order to get on in the world. Let him not be disheartened because he does not advance rapidly in his calling at the start. Let him adopt the good old Latin motto, *Festina lente*, "Hasten slowly," and he will find himself greatly the gainer in the end. "As in races," says Bacon in his "Essays," "it is not the large stride or high lift that makes the speed, so in business, the keeping close to the matter, and not taking too much of it at once, procureth dispatch. . . . I knew a wise man that had it for a by-word, when he saw men hasten to a conclusion, 'Stay a little, that we may make an end the sooner.'" Goethe remarks that "in all the works of God there is a conspicuous absence of haste and hurry. All that He does ripens slowly." The folly of the impatient haste of our age is well illustrated by the experience of an American traveler in Europe, who started early one morning to climb a mountain. Stimulated by the bracing air and inspiring scenery, he pushed on briskly, instead of husbanding his strength for the uphill work before him. Soon after setting out he overtook a peasant on his way to the summit. The man was walking slowly,

yet with a steady pace. Wondering, as he left the countryman behind, that the inspiration of the atmosphere and the surrounding scenery had not produced upon him the effect which he himself experienced, our enthusiastic tourist before long began to lag, and by noon he was glad to throw himself down in the shade of a wayside tree. As he realized how sorely he had taxed his strength, and that his fatigue made him loath to leave his shady resting-place, he happened to cast his eyes down the valley. What was his surprise to behold the peasant of the morning swinging up the road with the same steady stride, as fresh as he was earlier in the day! Presently passing the discomfited tourist, he disappeared in the distance, and left the traveler to his reflections on this new version of the old story of the hare and tortoise.

Let us, then, take time for our work and time for our play, and especially time for a less hurried preparation for our life's work. "Deliberating delay," says wise and quaint Sir Thomas Browne, "is wise cunctation, and slowness not slothfulness." It is a well known fact that men who rise slowly and steadily to places of honor are not made dizzy by sudden elevation. The great moment comes in due time, and they "walk up to fame as to a friend." It is a well known physiological fact that a man can accomplish more work in a lifetime by resting one day in seven, and more in a day, in the long run, by brief rests during it, than by working on the seventh day and by working all day long, without any respite. It is well known that during the exodus to California in 1848-1850, gold-hunters who rested from toil on Sunday not only outstripped in the race for gold those who scrambled for it seven days in the week, but arrived

at their goal in a far better physical condition. The most effective worker is never in a hurry ; the dawdler, when he accomplishes anything, which is rarely, is always so. Who ever heard of such Titanic workers as Brougham, Palmerston, Herbert Spencer, or Horace Mann being in a hurry ? Dante was in no hurry when composing his immortal poem, in which heaven and earth are brought under tribute, and which, he says, kept him lean many years. Goethe, who said of one of his ballads that " whole years of reflection are comprised in it," was not in a hurry. " The most successful men," said Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, recently to a newspaper correspondent, " are those whose success is the result of a steady accretion. That intellect is more vigorous that has attained its strength gradually. It is the man who carefully pegs his way up, step by step, with his mind becoming wider and wider, and progressively better able to grasp any theme or situation, persevering in what he knows to be practical, and concentrating his thought upon it, who is bound to succeed to the greatest degree."

CHAPTER XXXV

“ SHORT CUTS ”

“ The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.”

LONGFELLOW.

AKIN to the feverish, hurried life of Americans is their love of short cuts. It is especially a weakness of our young men and young women. Short cuts in education, short cuts to the learned professions, to the mercantile calling, to wealth, to distinction, are craved by hundreds who have their fortunes to make. Some years ago a professor in one of our universities received a letter from a young woman in the West, asking if he did not think she would be qualified to teach elocution, if she should come to the university and take twelve lessons in the art. Such persons have no conception of the necessity or of the time and toil required for laying broad and deep foundations for their life-work. The prospect of long, weary years of toil in preparatory school and college appalls them, and they crave abridged methods and royal roads to knowledge, by which a science, an art, or a language may be mastered in a few easy lessons, without strain of body or mind.

An Alabama newspaper stated a few years ago that a convicted murderer in that State addressed to the

governor the following note: "I wish you would give me a respite of thirty days. I am short in my religion. I intended to get it last week; but was too busy." Not unlike this appears to be the idea entertained by many regarding education. Preparation for their life-work does not exact years of toil, but may be quickly extemporized. Not so thought Edwards, Channing, Webster, Wirt, Choate, and other giants of the clerical, legal, and other professions. Carlyle says with grim humor: "The richer the nature, the harder and slower is its development. Two boys were once members of a class in the Edinburgh grammar school, — John ever trim, precise, and a dux; Walter ever slovenly, and a dolt. In due time John became Baillie John, of Hunter Square, and Walter became Sir Walter, of the universe."

No way has yet been found by which to make the attainment of excellence — of mastery — easy, even in the lowest accomplishments. Even skill in penmanship is not acquired without persistent labor and long years of weary effort; even half a lifetime is not found too much for the attainment of inferior arts, such as that of sending a ball through the bull's-eye of a target, balancing one's self on a wire, or mastery at chess. An Englishman, who learned archery in the East Indies, tells us that his master made him practice the attitude and keep drawing the bowstring to his ear for three months together, before he would suffer him to set an arrow. What, then, shall be thought of the judgment of those persons who expect to become masters of a science, a profession, or a trade in a few months or a year? When Giardini was asked how long it would take to learn to play on the violin, he replied, "Twelve hours a day for

twenty years together." Is a knowledge of French, German, Italian — of law, medicine, theology, business — to be acquired in a twentieth part of that time?

College students sometimes strive to shorten the period of study by crowding the studies of two years into one, but all such attempts are delusions. A truth constantly overlooked by them and by all short-cut students, is that in mastering any branch of knowledge, time, as well as application, is an essential element of success. To make our acquisitions our own and hold them fast in the memory, a period sufficiently long for the formation of mental associations between the newly acquired information and that previously possessed must elapse, so that the new ideas may be linked with the old by suggestive chains. No new knowledge is really our own until it has been so turned over and over in the mind that it is not merely added to the old, but interpenetrates it, so that the old can scarcely come into "the sphere of consciousness" without bringing the new with it. A student is said once to have asked the president of Oberlin College if he could not take a shorter course than that prescribed by the curriculum of the institution. "Oh, yes," was the reply; "but that depends on what you want to make of yourself. When God wants to make an oak, he takes a hundred years; but when he wants to make a squash, he takes six months." Naturalists tell us that an animal's term of life is proportionate to the time it takes to reach maturity. Why does the elephant live a century or upwards? Because it matures slowly. It is the same with mental growth. The brain which ripens quickly stops growing early, and speedily declines in power. In reading the lives

of the giants of the learned professions we find that they all, with few exceptions, spent years in preparatory training for their life-work. Chief Justice Taney, when preparing for the bar, spent twelve hours a day over his text-books. When Heyne, in poverty, was pursuing in youth those classical studies which won for him a professorship in the University of Göttingen and world-wide fame, he allowed himself for six months but two nights' sleep in a week.

One of the greatest mistakes in the training of the young in our country is the abolition of the old system of binding out boys to a trade. To-day very few learn a trade. They pick up what knowledge they fancy they may require as they go along, just as a student crams for an examination, simply to "get through," without any effort at perfect mastery of a business or a trade. They flatter themselves that they can make up all deficiencies afterwards while pursuing their future calling. But this is a fatal mistake. Every period of life has its distinct duties, and work omitted in the beginning of a career cannot be performed at a later day without infringing on the work of that day, besides being less effective than if done in season. There are few greater sources of satisfaction than to feel, as one arrives at each successive station in his career, that he is thoroughly equipped and prepared by his early training for all the emergencies and difficulties that may confront him. Instead of dreading them, he exults in the opportunity to do battle with them. On the other hand, what misery and mortification must one feel if conscious that, owing to early neglect, the shirking of difficulty, and haste to start in life, he is utterly unequal to the tasks and trials before him! Let every young man, then, beware of short cuts; they are, with rare exceptions, a delusion and a snare.

Let every young man, then, beware of short cuts ; they are, with rare exceptions, a delusion and a snare.

It is pleasant to find our leading man of genius, the Concord sage, — thoroughly American though he was, — expressing his utter abhorrence of “short cuts.” “I hate,” says Emerson, “the shallow Americanism which hopes to get rich by credit, to get knowledge by raps on midnight tables, skill without study, mastery without apprenticeship, power through a packed jury or caucus, or wealth by fraud. In this life of show, puffing, advertisement . . . all excellence is lost sight of in the hunger for sudden performance and unearned praise.” What would the Concord sage think, if living to-day, of some of the fashionable devices for gaining a knowledge of current events, literature, and art, without the slightest mental effort beyond that exacted by listening to a glib speaker ?

It is said that in our large cities there is a class of women who gain a livelihood by meeting companies of their sex at the houses of the latter, and talking to them on the leading topics of the day. Their hearers are thus enabled, without having to search wearily through books, periodicals, and newspapers, to acquire a personal knowledge of current events, such as will qualify them when in society to take part, either in the drawing-room or at the dinner-table, in any conversation that may spring up on art, the drama, literature, or political events. Still other women expound special subjects, “posting up” their hearers regarding the lives and works of German or Russian writers, or French or Italian painters. What a convenience it must be to a lady of our day, — what a saving of expense for books and midnight oil, of eye-sight, and of brain-wear, — to have her knowledge

thus provided, her thinking done, her opinions made up for her on social, political, literary, and artistic matters, and ready for use in society, without the wearisome research and drudgery to which cultivated men are subjected! "It is beautiful," says Charles Dudley Warner, "to witness our reliance upon others. The house may be full of books, . . . but if we wish to read anything or study anything, we resort to a club. A subject which we might grapple with and run down by a few hours of vigorous and absorbed attention in a library, gaining strength of mind by a resolute encountering of difficulties, by personal effort, we sit around for a month or season in a club, expecting somehow to take the information by effortless contiguity with it. A book which we could read and master in an evening, we can have read to us in a month in the club, without the least intellectual effort."

When Madame de Staël was in Germany, and was introduced to that subtlest and obscurest of metaphysicians, Hegel, she said to him, "*Monsieur, voudriez-vous bien m'expliquer votre système en peu de mots?*" (Will you please, sir, to explain to me your system in a few words?) Persons who think themselves entitled to laugh at Neckar's daughter, because she thought a quarter of an hour enough for the explication of the most transcendental metaphysics, will yet think they can master the ideas of a Goethe or an Angelo by listening to a "talk" or a lecture. When shall we learn that no science can be obtained without toil; that ideas must be presented over and over to the mind, before they can become familiar to it; that skill is the effect of habit; and that habit is acquired by the frequent exercise of the same act?

When shall we learn that the laws of nature cannot be evaded ; that all schemes to put ourselves in possession of intellectual treasures, without regular and strenuous efforts on our parts, all promises to insinuate learning into our minds at so small an outlay of money, time, and labor that we shall scarcely be sensible of the process, are the merest delusions, which can only end in disappointment and chagrin ? If there is anything certain in the conduct of life, it is that smooth-tongued professors of this and that 'ology, who promise their pupils to lead them along " the primrose path of dalliance," avoiding all steep and thorny roads, unconsciously propose a sorry preparation for a world in which labor is the eternal condition on which the rich man gains an appetite for his dinner, and the poor man a dinner for his appetite. Depend upon it, reader, that the author of " Telemachus " was right, when he sought to impress upon his pupil that there was no royal road to learning, and that even the grace of God could not make a man a scholar. A man may be " superficially omniscient " without much strenuous effort ; but there is but one path to thorough knowledge — the republican one of persistent toil.

CHAPTER XXXVI

LIONS IN THE WAY

“The distant mountains that uprear
Their solid bastions to the skies
Are crossed by pathways that appear
As we to higher levels rise.”

WHEN a young man who has chosen a calling is fairly engaged with its work, he finds himself confronted with difficulties of which he had never dreamed. Often they seem hydra-headed, and one is no sooner overcome than others spring up in its place. He finds, too, that the nobler the calling in which he is engaged, the more dazzling its prizes, the severer and more exacting is the toil which is required. It is a painful hour when — as is the case with some sanguine aspirants — the dream of years dissolves, and the dreamer discovers that the world is not enchanted ground, full of murmuring streams, by the side of which he may saunter, nor full of arbors where he may slumber without molestation from man or fiend, but that it is a battlefield where he must fight every inch of the way or be trampled under foot in the deadly strife for money, place, or power. Who can wonder that under such circumstances many beginners are disheartened, and abandon their callings for others which they fancy to be beset with fewer difficulties? Such young men need to be told that the difficulties and struggles which discourage them are, if rightly used, not enemies, but

friends. Obstacles, hindrances, hardships are the very things they need to sharpen their faculties and strengthen their sinews. In no other way can the fibres of their mental and moral being be so toughened and compacted. Not by floating down with the current, but by struggling broad-breasted against the stream of life — by buffeting its billows “with hearts of controversy” — are the muscles strengthened. As the finest tools get their temper from fire, their edge from grinding, so the noblest characters are developed by collision and friction. Just as the friction which retards a railway train is the very secret of its locomotion, which would cease if the track were oiled, so, when an aspirant to worldly success is relieved of all friction, and the track of his life is oiled with wealth inherited, he fails to advance.

If the reader doubts the truth of all this, let him listen to Doctor Franklin. What says this “self-made” and preëminently practical man, one of the shrewdest observers and most sagacious advisers the world has seen? “To be thrown upon one’s own resources,” he says, “is to be cast into the very lap of fortune, for our faculties then undergo a development and display an energy of which they were previously unsusceptible.” Franklin speaks, not at random, but from personal experience; for after he landed in Philadelphia, with all his worldly goods tied up in a handkerchief, years of struggle and disappointment passed before he won a competence. When Northcote, the painter, was asked whether a young man fresh from the galleries of Italy would make a great painter, he replied, “No.” “Why?” “Because he has an income of thirty thousand dollars a year.”

Opposition, hardships, trials, are usually better friends to a young man of grit than opportunity and favoring gales. They call out the great qualities, the hidden fire of a man, as the spark is elicited by the collision of the flint and steel. It was the stress of poverty that drove Rome's exquisite lyrist, Horace, to verse, and his verse made him the friend of Mæcenas and Augustus. It was the bayonet of sharp necessity that drove Samuel Johnson to become "a first-rank soldier in the field of literature." Only the sting of want could have impelled him to overcome his constitutional sluggishness and love of ease. Had fortune turned him into a clover field, he would have lain down and rolled in it. It was her lack of pelf that forced George Eliot to write her first story; and critics say that Mendelssohn, great as were his musical gifts, would have been a still greater composer had he only been as poor as Mozart and Beethoven. William Secker has said, not less truly than happily, that if Joseph had not been Egypt's prisoner he never would have been Egypt's governor. The chain about his feet ushered in the golden chains about his neck.

All history shows that it is far harder for a young man to overcome the insidious, enervating effect of affluence than to endure the grip of poverty and want. One can fight the gorgon, and slay the dragon; but who can resist the songs of the Sirens? A single winter in Capua did more for the ruin of Hannibal than all that the snow and cold of the Alps, or the sun of Italy, or the treachery of the Gauls, or the prowess of the Romans could achieve. For one Roosevelt, who rises to distinction in spite of the seductions of wealth, ease, and luxury, there are thousands who, under similar circumstances, would become mental and moral

ciphers. So necessary at a man's start in life does poverty appear to be as a goad to work, that an eminent English judge, who was asked one day what contributed most to success at the bar, is reported to have replied, "Some succeed by great talent, some by high connections, some by miracle, but the majority by beginning without a shilling." Among the last were such giants of the bar as Marshall, Martin, Mason, Choate, and Webster.

An American scholar, climbing the steep path of the Wartburg, where Luther was once screened from his enemies, inquired the way of a little girl. "Immer hinaus und hinauf" (Ever onward and upward), she replied. "Ever onward and upward!" should be the motto of every beginner in a calling, who is climbing the dizzy steeps of worldly success and honor. The struggle which he deprecates vivifies, rounds, and perfects his nature. "Ours is not a profession in which a man gets along by a hop, skip, and jump," wrote William Wirt some seventy years ago to a brother lawyer; "it is the steady march of a heavily armed legionary soldier." The remark is true, but not more true of the calling of Wirt and Coke and Choate than of every other one worth following. The man who is satisfied with what he has done in any profession has reached his culminating point. He will advance no farther, but will only mark time, if he do not positively go backward. "Man's destiny is to be, not dissatisfied, but forever unsatisfied."

Let, then, the beginner in life persevere, and he will gradually learn that difficulties, obstacles, and hindrances are the very things he needs to "prick the sides of his intent" and elicit all his power. "He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and

sharpens our skill." "Go on, sir!" was the reply of D'Alembert, when a student complained to him of the difficulty he found in mastering the elements of mathematics; "go on, sir, and faith and strength will come to you." The Indian believes that the courage and strength of the enemy he slays pass into his own soul; and so it is with the strength of the obstacles a youth overcomes at his start in life. It is not by prosperity, but by adversity, not by wealth, but by poverty, that the persistence of a strong and noble nature is stimulated, its energy roused, and its character developed. Do you want to grow strong? Then you must grapple with the strong; you must measure yourself, if a professional man, with men of renown, and wrestle with all your might. A throw upon your back will do you good. The great dragon to be conquered by the struggles through this world is indolence; this done, the rest is comparatively easy.

Who are the leading merchants in our great cities? The sons of the rich? No, they are almost universally the sons of humble farmers, traders, and mechanics, men who, when poor country boys, came up to Boston or New York with their whole property tied up in a bandanna handkerchief, but with heads full of hope and daring, enterprise and thrift,—into whose great warehouses, twenty or thirty years later, the ships of all nations were emptying their cargoes. Who are the young men that take the highest rank in our colleges, and lead their professions in after life? Are they the sons of the Astors, Vanderbilts, and Jay Goulds,—of senators in Congress and governors of States? Far from it; with a few exceptions, they are the youths who fight their way through college, with little or no help from father or friend; who defray the expenses of their

education by lighting street-lamps, carrying daily newspapers to subscribers, sweeping out churches, teaching country schools in winter, and serving as hotel waiters in summer. One of the most successful young lawyers in Chicago is a man whom we knew as a student in the old University of Chicago, where he ranked high in scholarship, and who spent his afternoons in hair-cutting and beard-trimming in a barber's shop.

Who receives the largest salary paid to a college president in the United States? It is President Jordan, of Leland Stanford Junior University. He fought his way through Cornell, and now receives fifteen thousand dollars a year for his services.

There are many youths, of a confident, self-admiring disposition, who boldly attack the obstacles in their path, but if they do not find every difficulty give way at their approach, their pride takes offense, and they sink into sloth or protracted indecision, and are lost forever. Every beginner in life should take to heart the truth that there is no "Open sesame," no magic or necromancy, by which to make the portals of prosperity fly open to him; but Fortune must be wooed with a solicitude and patience proportioned to her character as the shyest and most coquettish of female divinities. In short, there is no royal road to success in any profession or calling. In all accomplishment there is difficulty; the greater the work, the more desirable the prizes that are sought, the severer and more exacting is the toil required.

Our trials at school are only types of those that confront us all the way through life. As in arithmetic we mastered addition only to be confronted with subtraction, and subtraction only to find multiplication staring us in the face, and, again, conquered multipli-

cation only to wrestle with division, so it is to the end of our days. Burke said of himself that he was "not rocked and swaddled and dandled into a legislator;" but the same is true of the leaders in every other calling. How does the diplomatist gain his mastery of his art? Not by studying the lives, precepts, or examples of the Metternichs, Talleyrands, and other masters of the craft,—not even by his successes chiefly; but by being baffled, thwarted, outwitted, and defeated again and again. His antagonist is his helper, his unconscious teacher; and he learns more by his failures than he could have found out by success.

It has been said of Madame de Maintenon that perhaps she would never have mounted a throne had not her cradle been rocked in a prison. Surmounted obstacles not only increase our strength and skill, but hearten us in our future struggles. How is the mariner trained to self-reliance? Not by fair weather and smooth seas, but by his struggles with storms and tempests. It is the rough, dangerous seas and wintry nights of England that have given her a body of seamen unsurpassed on the globe. It was his frequent struggles with that legal and literal giant, Jeremiah Mason, that, more than any other thing, strengthened and sharpened the intellect of Daniel Webster when a beginner at the bar, and which cured him, as he himself acknowledged, of "the florid foolery" of his early jury addresses. "I have some of your *pounding* in my bones yet," he wrote to his old antagonist in 1830, just after his reply to Hayne.

In every calling the battle of life is fought up hill,—often with wind and sun in the face; but the hardships that intimidate the weak act only as a goad and stimulus to men of resolution and valor. He who

tamely bows to difficulty, sitting at the foot of the hill, instead of struggling to the top, may get a sheltered place,—a snug and safe retreat; but the world in its glory he can never see, and the malaria of the marshes, instead of the invigorating ozone of the heavens, it must be his doom to breathe.

CHAPTER XXXVII

“NO CHANCE TO GET ON”

“It may be said truly of difficulty what may be said fabulously of the devil : talk of it, think of it, and forthwith it will be present to you. For one substance of it, there are twenty shadows.” — *Self-Formation*.

A COMMON complaint of beginners in life's callings is the lack of opportunity to succeed. Many young professional men, lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc., have to wait wearily for many months, sometimes for years, before their services are required, or an opportunity is offered them to exhibit their abilities. Instead of “accepting the situation,” and regarding these years as golden ones for preparation for their life-work, to be used in storing their minds with knowledge and training them by study, observation, and thought, they too often chafe and fret at the world's neglect, and fall into habits of indolence, despondency, and dissipation. By so doing they are dooming themselves for life to a low rank in their profession, where a dreary struggle for a bare livelihood will be their fate.

One of the most disastrous things that can befall a young man is a quick and easy success at the start; and nothing is more advantageous in the long run than a struggle which gives him command of his powers, teaches him self-knowledge, and compels him to practice self-denial, economy, and patience, and keeps him at the foot of the ladder until he is strong enough to hold firmly every advance up its rounds.

In the order of nature the first years of a man's business or professional life are years of education. The time will come soon enough when he will need the largest attainable acquirements and the completest possible discipline of all his powers. During these early years he enjoys the only leisure for systematic study and self-culture he will ever have. Once fully engrossed in the cares of his calling, he will have little command of his time. Now is the period to get ready for the great occasions, the crises in life's voyage; when the storm bursts, there will be no time to set the masts or hang the rudder.

As that eminent veteran British commander, bronzed by forty-five years' hard service in the tented field, — Sir Charles James Napier, the hero of Scinde, — once wrote to a young officer: "A man cannot learn his profession without constant study to prepare for it, especially for the higher ranks, because he then wants the knowledge and experience of others, improved by his own. But when in a post of responsibility, he has no time to read; and if he come to such a post with an empty skull, it is too late to fill it, and he makes no figure. Thus many persons fail to distinguish themselves, and say they are unfortunate, which is untrue; their own previous idleness unfitted them to profit from fortune. The smith who has to look for his hammer when the iron is red, strikes too late; the hammer should be uplifted to fall like a thunderbolt, while the white heat is in the metal." These are the words of a great military genius, who, at the peace of 1815, after fourteen years' service in the Napoleonic wars, recommenced those profound military studies which made him, a quarter of a century later, the foremost soldier of his time, and who, as we have

already stated, with eighteen hundred men, won a fierce battle of five hours' duration against thirty thousand of the bravest warriors of India.

A great many young men complain of lack of opportunity, who have never qualified themselves to improve an opportunity when it comes. A great occasion is worth to a man just what — and no more than — his antecedents have qualified him to make of it. In a world of such incessant changes as ours, opportunities for rising are far from rare. Vacancies are continually occurring in places of honor, trust, and profit. The ceaseless swinging of the scythe of Death is clearing the ranks for eager aspirants. To the fully prepared man the doors of employment and success are sure to swing open at last. Water does not more surely seek its own level than work seeks the best men. The world is always groping about for men to fill places of responsibility; but of what use is the chance to the man who is unequal to the chance, or, again, to the man who is not on the alert to seize it? Lord Mansfield and Lord Chancellor Erskine, when poor, struggling barristers, obtained a brilliant start in their profession by the sudden illness of the senior counsel, or leaders, in two important law cases. By these accidents they were enabled to plead the cases themselves, which they did so brilliantly and successfully that briefs showered upon them. By a single giant bound they passed from obscurity to celebrity, from want to abundance, from the castle of Giant Despair to the Delectable Mountains. But of what use to them would the lucky accidents have been, if the young barristers had been unequal to the occasions, — if they had not prepared themselves by years of hard study to take advantage of them?

Another frequent complaint made by business men, especially those engaged in trade, is that there are no good opportunities now, such as there once were, to make money. Competition, men tell you, is so keen that the profits of business are small, while the risks of loss are many and large. To do a profitable business requires now not only more brains, but a larger capital and intenser activity than ever before. Trade tends to concentration in fewer and fewer hands. The great houses are continually absorbing the small ones, or by underselling them, driving them into bankruptcy. For every clerkship there are hundreds of applicants, which reduces wages so low that a young man who wishes to go into business by and by for himself can barely live, without laying up a dollar. Now, while there is a certain amount of truth in this, we believe it to be enormously exaggerated. We think we could show, had we space, that for a man who is abreast with the age and has mastered the latest and best modes of doing business, the present is in many respects the best time in the world's history to win an independence or a fortune. Instead, however, of showing the truth of this opinion, we will tell an anecdote.

About fifty years ago, we were chatting in a hotel in Maine with a shrewd old retired merchant over eighty years of age, who, beginning life a poor boy in a village in Kennebec County, Maine, had accumulated from eight hundred thousand to a million of dollars, — a sum equal, probably, to more than twice as much to-day. "People," said the old man, "are always complaining that there are no chances now to make money. Thirty years ago, they tell you, there were plenty of such chances; and, had you lived at

that time, you would have heard the same croakings. I remember well that people *then* said the days for acquiring fortunes had gone by, — that the time for making money was just after the Revolution ; and I have no doubt that during this last period there were plenty of unsuccessful men who asserted that there was no profit in business, — that the lucky men were those who lived a generation earlier. And so you might go back a hundred years, or more, and always you would hear from many persons the same despairing cry. Now, the fact is, Mr. Mathews," continued he, after pausing a moment to take a pinch of snuff, "that all times are good for making money, *if you only know how* ; and if you don't know how, all times are bad."

"But, Mr. G.," said we, "suppose that a young man is a clerk in a store in Boston, with a salary of only two hundred dollars a year, and he has to pay five dollars a week for his clothes and board ; how is he to lay up any money ? How is he to get a start in life, or find capital to get into any business for himself ?"

"I don't undertake," replied the old man in his shrill, low voice, "to say *how* it can be done ; I only say that, if he has the *will* to do it, it *will* be done. But, instead of arguing the matter, I will tell you a story. About fifty years ago, there was a poor boy in Maine, whose father, once independent, had lost most of his property by indorsing notes for friends, and lived in a log house. The boy used to pick strawberries and other fruits, and carry them two miles to a country village, where he sold them at three cents a quart. One day, a firm of traders, thinking he had a turn for business, asked him how he would

like to be one of their clerks. His eyes sparkled at the proposal, and on his saying that he would like the place, he was taken into the store. His salary for the first seven years was forty dollars a year and board. For the next two years he received one hundred dollars a year and his board. At the end of the nine years' clerkship, his employers took him into copartnership. How much money do you suppose he had at that time laid up?"

"Why," we replied, "if he had resembled some clerks that are employed to-day, he probably, if he could have got credit for such a sum, would have been about fifteen hundred dollars in debt."

"Well," said the old merchant in a tone of triumph, "that is precisely the sum which he had laid up in clean cash. And now, if you don't believe the story, I will tell you who the boy was. *He was your own father*, and I was one of the firm that employed him as clerk and finally took him into copartnership."

Surprised at the revelation, and conscious that we had been floored by an *argumentum ad hominem*, we were silent for a few minutes, and then added, "But the whole of your clerk's salary, Mr. G., for the nine years, put at compound interest, would n't have amounted to the fifteen hundred dollars which you say he had hoarded." "Oh," was the reply, "he kept his money turning over, of course. He fished at night in the Kennebec, — caught and sold salmon, and dickered with the farmers, etc. But he never neglected his employers' business. He dressed well, and always had a handsome extra suit of clothes to go a-courting in. He was my partner for thirty years, and the only one I did not lose money by. The great trouble with the young men of to-day is, that they want

to eat their cake and still have it. They want to spend their earnings as they go along, and yet get rich. Now I have no objection to their eating their cake as they get it; but I do object, if, after they have done so, they turn round and envy and grumble at us as mean and miserly who have saved our cake for a later day."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SHYNESS A FOE TO SUCCESS

“To succeed, a man should carry about with him the outward and incontrovertible signs of success.” — HAZLITT.

“God may forgive sins; but awkwardness has no forgiveness in heaven or earth.” — HAWTHORNE.

ONE of the deadliest foes to worldly success is shyness. No young man who is afflicted with this trait — call it bashfulness, shamefacedness, *mauvaise honte*, or what you will — can ever hope, unless he conquers it, to rise to high position in any profession, except possibly in the medical. This unhappy disposition is not only a source of much misery to its victim, but is also one of the most insurmountable bars to success in life. Shy persons are generally persons of a quiet, amiable disposition, and they often have a fine taste and excellent moral feelings. They shrink from society and from *rencontres* with their fellow-men through an excessive delicacy of organism, which makes the bustle of life, and even its customary courtesies, unpleasant to them. They lack, usually, a sufficiency of animal spirits, and a consciousness of their infirmity reacts upon them by producing still greater embarrassment, so that the more they keep out of society the more unfitted for it do they become. Should some chance throw such a man into company, and you succeed by dint of great effort in having a little playful converse with him, yet if on the very

next day you encounter him on the street and expect a frank recognition, you will be frozen by a distant and chilling bow. You infer that he is cold and haughty, when, in fact, he may be modest and warm-hearted. He passed you with a frigid greeting simply because he could not address you without an embarrassment not only painful in itself, but which would leave him in a state of self-humiliation doubling or trebling his pain. The seeming assumption of superiority is, in reality, only a confession of the most distressing weakness.

Not only men of delicate mould are shy, but men of great bodily and mental strength also have been tormented with shyness. Who that has read of the frank and open manner, the abandon and jesting humor of the celebrated theologian, logician, rhetorician, and political economist, Archbishop Whately, would for a moment dream that he was ever afflicted with the wretched infirmity of which we are speaking? Yet he himself tells us that in his youth he suffered all the agonies of extreme shyness for many years, and "was driven to utter despair."

About twenty-six years ago we received from a young man twenty-one years old, who was living with his widowed mother in New York City, a letter asking advice. Since leaving school he had been employed in several kinds of business. His last position was in a dry-goods commission store, from which, after thirteen months' labor, he, with five or six of his fellow-clerks, had been discharged on account of "the hard times." For six months he had been unable to get any employment, "and the consequence is," he wrote, "that I am very despondent and hopeless. I am naturally of a shy, bashful disposition, and, as you

describe it, I go about 'with an air of perpetual apology for being in the world.' . . . I am greatly ashamed of such feelings, and should be only too glad to overcome them. I have made several attempts to correct them, but they have all met with signal failure. My natural shyness, together with the life of idleness which I have led for the past few months, has prompted me almost entirely to abandon society, and at times I feel wretched. I have gradually lost all self-respect, and it seems as though others have lost their respect for me." He adds that he had just read "Getting on in the World," and some of its remarks had struck him as being so applicable to his own case, that he took the liberty of writing to the author for advice. The letter was written in a beautiful, legible hand, and was evidently from the pen of a youth who had received, as he said, "a good practical education."

Our sympathies were so stirred by the communication that we wrote in reply a long letter, giving the best counsel we could command, at the cost of the best part of a day's labor. Our interest in the case was doubtless due largely to the fact that we had ourselves once been a victim of the infirmity of which our correspondent complained. In youth, and even for many years afterwards, we had been the shyest of mortals, and we knew, therefore, from bitter experience the miseries it inflicts. We could look no one — unless some very near relative or friend — in the face; and not to be able to do that is to be under the hopeless condemnation of nervousness, indecision, feebleness, and absurdity, in all social intercourse. Even to this day, although this mental disease has long been dead, its ghostly shadow will occasionally come over us. When, in college, we had reached our senior

year, instead of exulting, as did all our classmates, that we were so near graduation, we looked forward with apprehension — we had almost said, with terror — to that event, because, on its occurrence, we should have to meet the rude shocks of the world.

Fortunately, four years of professional study intervened between our graduation and this last event, and we were spared during that time the misery of self-dependence. Reading law two years to please our father, who did not require us to practice it, we became at last enamored of the study, which was dry and distasteful at first, and kept on two years longer, studying as we never had studied before, and making ourself thoroughly familiar with all the branches of the science. Why, then, are we not a “gowned vulture,” to use Milton’s phrase, “exasperating the bickerings of Doe and Roe,” to-day? Simply because of that miserable constitutional shyness with which we were afflicted — that dread of collision with our fellows, of the rough and tumble of life. We could, and did, with perfect ease and self-confidence argue law cases for an hour at a time in the moot court of the Harvard Law School before Judge Story, with whose name Europe was ringing far and wide; or before the severe and searching Simon Greenleaf, his associate; and in the presence of such fellow-students as W. M. Evarts, E. Rockwood Hoar, Richard H. Dana, George Shepley, and others whose names have since been sounded by the trump of fame. But the thought of conducting an actual *bona fide* case for a client in a county court room, or of even standing up to plead before that awful dignitary, a country justice of the peace and of the quorum — made us quake with dread.

So it is that we can speak from actual experience of the paralyzing effects of that inborn and ingrained shyness — that *mauvaise honte*, or false shame, bashfulness, diffidence, or whatever one may choose to call it — of which some men, apparently, can no more rid themselves than of their skins; and, craving pardon for the egotism in which, for the sake of illustration, we have indulged, we will proceed to consider the nature of this weakness and its possible remedies. First, let us observe that shyness seems to be an exclusively Gothic quality, — a trait characteristic of people of Teutonic stock. Who ever saw a shy, shrinking Italian, a bashful Spaniard, or a diffident and reserved Frenchman? Who ever entered a circle of Celts, and did not find them “free and easy,” lively, communicative? And who ever fell in with a company of Englishmen, and did not find in every one of them more or less of that shyness, stiffness, and reserve which leads John Bull, when traveling by rail, to seek a vacant compartment in which to avoid companionship, and on entering the dining-room of his club, to look out for an unoccupied table? The stiff, awkward, uncommunicative Englishman manifests it everywhere, and never more palpably than when he tries to hide his shyness under a brusqueness of manner which is unnatural to him. George Sand attributes the rigidity of John Bull to a stock of *fluide Britannique* which he carries about with him, and which renders him impassive under all circumstances, and as impervious to the atmosphere of any region he traverses as a mouse in the centre of an exhausted receiver.

The celebrated Dr. Jowett, master of Balliol College, Oxford, who regarded usefulness in after life as the supreme end of all collegiate training, once

observed that "men of very great ability often fail in life, because they are unable to play their parts with effect. They are shy, awkward, self-conscious, and deficient in manners — faults which are as ruinous as vices." How true is this saying, and how abundant are the proofs of its truth! What a help to worldly advancement is that secondary kind of practical ability, ability of manner, and what a hindrance is the lack of it; yet men of brilliant talents and large attainments not infrequently lack it.

Whatever the cause, whether it be a peculiarity of natural constitution, weakness of nerves, delicacy of organization, or some unfortunate associations of early life, this trait is a source of continual awkwardness, embarrassment, and mortification; and what makes it peculiarly exasperating to its victim is that, although he may have on any occasion the clearest and most delicate perception of what is proper, he cannot exemplify it in practice. The presence of half a dozen, more or fewer, of his fellow-men oppresses him with a restraint which fetters or freezes all his powers. In spite of the clearest perception of the absurdity of such a feeling, and the most strenuous efforts to overcome it, he finds himself disconcerted by the presence of a number of persons for whom individually he may have little respect, and thrown into confusion by trifles which his good sense utterly despises.

Addison, with all his fine abilities, was exceedingly shy — the most timid and awkward man, Lord Chesterfield said, that he ever saw. Neither his commerce with society nor his intercourse with high life gave him the free and unembarrassed manner of a man of the world. Among his intimate friends his conversation was charming, but before strangers, or even a

single stranger, he was embarrassed and constrained, — “preserving his dignity,” Pope says, “by a stiff silence.” The poet Cowper was a bundle of nerves and fears, as timid as a hare and as sensitive as a mimosa. So completely did his shyness possess him, that a public exhibition of himself, he said, was mortal poison to his feelings. Gray, the author of the exquisite “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,” was so diffident or fastidious, or more likely both, that, according to Horace Walpole, he was the worst company in the world. “His writings are admirable. He himself is not agreeable.” At the University of Cambridge he kept himself aloof from his fellow-collegians, till at last, like an owl shutting himself up from society and daylight, he was, like the owl, hunted and hooted at whenever he chanced to show himself in public. The bare thought of having his portrait prefixed to his works terrified him out of his wits. “To appear in proper person at the head of my works, consisting of half a dozen ballads in thirty pages,” he wrote to a friend, “would be worse than the pillory. I do assure you, if I had received such a book, with such a frontispiece, it would have given me a palsy.” When, at last, his portrait did appear in a volume of his verse, he probably died, it is said, of nervous agitation at the publicity he had thus acquired.

It seems difficult to believe that a wit with such a superabundance of animal spirits as those of Sydney Smith, and with a laugh so obstreperous, was ever afflicted with shyness. A confession of such a weakness by such a man affects us as ludicrously as that of the Quaker “of the old Foxian orgasm,” of whom Charles Lamb tells, who, “with a face that would

have scared away the Levities, the Jocos, Risusque, faster than the Loves fled the face of Dis at Enna," confessed that he had been a wit in his youth. Yet the witty and mirth-provoking diner-out, who in after life so easily set the tables in a roar, tells us in all seriousness that in his youth he was diffident in general society. Writing, in 1809, to the hostess of Holland House upon the probable effects on him of a residence in the country, he says, "I shall take myself again to shy tricks, pull about my watch-chain, and become, as I was before, your abomination." William Wirt's fine natural gifts were obscured in his youth by the cloud of an extreme bashfulness. When pleading at the bar, his timidity was so great that he could hardly get through a sentence intelligibly. His diffidence gave rise to an impetuous manner, and, when heated by discussion, he clipped his words sadly, his naturally musical voice grew harsh, and his articulation became rapid, indistinct, and imperfect.

Even Lord Chesterfield, the accomplished courtier and man of the world, the polished mirror of manners, whose name is a synonym of self-possession, ease, and *savoir faire*, tells us that when first introduced into good company, with all the awkwardness and rust of Cambridge about him, he was nearly frightened out of his wits. "I was determined," he says, "to be what I thought civil; I made fine low bows, and placed myself below everybody. If I saw people whisper, I was sure it was at me, and I thought myself the sole object of either the ridicule or the censure of the whole company, who, heaven knows, did not trouble their heads about me."

Charles Mathews, who made thousands roar with

laughter by his mirthful entertainments, was one of the shyest of men. Lamé as he was, he would make long circuits through the by-lanes of London, to avoid recognition. Sir James Stephen, the brilliant Edinburgh reviewer and professor of history at Oxford, — the father of Leslie and Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, — was a man of exquisitely sensitive nature, “a man without a skin,” as his wife warned his children. In early life this quality manifested itself in a shyness which Sir Henry Taylor says “was remarkable beyond all shyness that you could imagine in any one whose soul had not preëxisted in a wild duck.” But even he was matched in this quality by an illustrious American writer, Nathaniel Hawthorne, of whom Emerson says that the most agreeable compliment you could pay him was to imply that you had not observed him in a house or street where you had met him. All his life he was as shy as a bat. No man was ever more humiliated by his social *gaucheries*, — with reference to which he once said, “God may forgive sins, but awkwardness has no forgiveness in heaven or earth.” One who ever heard Theodore Parker at the Boston Music Hall or on the anti-slavery platform is surprised to learn from Mr. Chadwick’s biography that, bold and even daring as he was as a writer and speaker, yet something of the rustic habit clung to him through life, and that his consciousness of this involved a certain shyness and timidity in such aristocratic companies as flourished in the chilly atmosphere of Beacon Hill.

Mark Pattison, the accomplished rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, was a great sufferer from shyness. “I blushed and trembled when I spoke or moved in company,” he says, “and dared not raise a glass to

my lips for fear it should be seen how my hand trembled." Robert Chambers, in one of his excellent essays, tells of a kindly Scottish peer who, owing to his constitutional shyness, was disliked by all his acquaintances. To equals and inferiors, to neighbors and tenants, he appeared a freezing aristocrat. When, in his youth, the king of England was spending an evening at his father's house, and the children of the family were ordered to be prepared for a formal introduction to his Majesty, the father was mortified by the absence of his eldest son. He had secretly stolen away from home at an early hour to avoid the dreaded ceremony. A certain English nobleman was so shy that his own servants were instructed to avoid as far as possible meeting him on staircases and in passages. He was deemed proud and aristocratic, when it is altogether probable that he was one of those sensitive, shy men to whom greetings are intolerable, and from whom a "Good-morning" is wrung like gold from a miser. But shyer than any of the men we have named, one of the oddest men in this respect that ever lived, was the brilliant essayist and critic, William Hazlitt. Strange to say, his great dread in visiting his friends was that of encountering the servants in the hall, and as there was no way of reaching the drawing-room without running that gauntlet, Hazlitt never entered a friend's house without writhing under the feelings engendered during his passage to it.

The young man who suffers from bashfulness, self-distrust, or false shame will see from the foregoing examples that he suffers in the best company. Nearly all the victims we have cited shook off at some time the shackles that fettered them ; and so may he.

But how, if possible, can this distressing weakness, so fatal to worldly advancement and usefulness, be overcome? It must be gratifying to know that even in its extremest forms it can be and has been overcome by persistent effort. Sydney Smith conquered it. After much suffering he discovered, he says, that all men were not solely occupied in observing *him*, as all young people are apt to think of themselves, and that shamming was of no use, the world being very clear-sighted and soon estimating a man at his just value. "This cured me, and I determined to be natural, and let the world find me out." Whately reached the same result by sheer force of will: "I said to myself, 'Why should I endure this torture all my life to no purpose? I would bear it still if there was any progress made, any success to be hoped for; but, since there is not, I will die quietly without taking any more doses. I have tried my very utmost, and find that I must be awkward as a bear all my life in spite of it. I will endeavor to think as little about it as a bear, and make up my mind to endure what can't be cured.' From this time I not only got rid of the personal suffering of shyness, but also of most of those faults of manner which consciousness produces, and acquired at once an easy and natural manner, careless in the extreme, rough and awkward — for smoothness and grace are quite out of my way — and, of course, tutorially pedantic, but unconscious, and therefore giving expression to that good will toward all men which I really feel."

William Wirt was cheered and encouraged by his friend Benjamin Edwards, who, to overcome his shyness, endeavored to raise his self-estimate by reminding him of his natural advantages, and showing him

that Dorsey and Pinkney, the great lawyers whom he so admired and envied, were making their way to the pinnacles of the profession under obstacles as great as any which he (Wirt) had to encounter. The result was that by persistent effort Wirt at last overcame his tormenting self-consciousness, and became so self-reliant that he even dared to grapple with the giant of the bar, "Glendower" Pinkney. Chesterfield suffered for some time like a criminal at the bar, and would certainly have renounced all polite company whatever, if he had not been so convinced of the absolute necessity of forming his manners upon those of the best social circles, that he determined to persevere and suffer anything or everything rather than not compass that point. "Insensibly it grew easier to me, and I began not to bow so ridiculously low, and to answer questions without great hesitation or stammering. I got more courage soon afterward, and was intrepid enough to go up to a fine woman and tell her that I thought it a warm day. She answered me very civilly that she thought so, too ; upon which the conversation ceased upon my part for some time, till she, good-naturedly resuming it, spoke to me thus : 'I see your embarrassment, and I am sure that the few words you said to me cost you a great deal ; but do not be discouraged for that reason and avoid good company. We see that you desire to please, and *that is the main point* ; you want only the manner, and *you think that you want it still more than you do*. You must go through your novitiate before you can profess good breeding, and if you will be my novice I will present you to my acquaintance as such.' "

Let the young man who suffers from shyness — who is kept in the background by nervous timidity —

take courage from these examples. Let him force himself into society and the bustle and uproar of the world at all hazards, and school himself to take part in its affairs. Let him keep in mind that so far is he from being the focus of all eyes in society, so far are his fellow-men from watching all his movements, that they are only too profoundly indifferent to him ; and banishing all thought of them, as they do of him, let him be himself, and he may rely upon it that the malady which has poisoned all his life and kept him in obscurity will disappear. Let him especially avoid the company of melancholy, self-distrustful, despondent people — mingling with the sunny, the buoyant, and the hopeful ; and gradually his shyness, with its fears, flusters, and perturbations, will leave him — the horror of a conspicuous position will lose its sting. Better still, his extreme nervousness and exquisite sensitiveness to impressions, once mastered and controlled, may be made in some departments of effort — as in public speaking, for example — a source of power. It is a certain anxious diffidence which, kept in check, makes one take pains to win and deserve success, that stimulates energy and sustains perseverance. In oratory, shyness is like the tension of the harp-string, which renders it liable to break, but which also makes it musical. The delicacy of perception, the exquisite sensibility to impressions, the nervous tremulousness, which are among the causes of shyness, are the very soul of eloquence. The stammering Demosthenes was probably a very shy man ; but the extreme sensibility which made him such, made him the king of orators.

CHAPTER XXXIX

LITTLE HINDRANCES TO SUCCESS

"The subtlest diplomacy has sometimes been interrupted by a cough or a sneeze." — CHESTERFIELD.

"What we call little things are merely the causes of great things. They are the beginning, the embryo, and it is the point of departure which decides the whole of existence." — AMIEL.

MANY persons speak contemptuously of certain matters which are essential to success in life, to health and to happiness, as "little things." They forget that life is made up largely of little things. As daylight can be seen through very small holes, so very little things will indicate character. Every young man, therefore, who wishes to succeed in life should look vigilantly at the little things — the little mannerisms, peculiarities — which may affect his chances of success and usefulness. Employers, in deciding upon an application for a clerkship or other position, are influenced not a little by the applicant's looks, dress, demeanor, and language. It was a very little thing that started Lafitte in the career in which he became a great banker in Paris. When a poor boy, he applied one day for a situation in a bank, but was refused. As he went out the door, he stooped and picked up a pin. The president of the bank saw this, called him back, and gave him a place, from which he rose to eminence. On the other hand, many a young man with good abilities has failed to get employment

or advancement on account of little offensive peculiarities or idiosyncrasies, — the use of coarse expressions or slang, slovenliness, or indications of the use of tobacco or cigarettes. It is the little foxes that spoil the grapevines; and it is the little disagreeable traits that bar the door to many a youth's advancement.

One of the best letters of recommendation a youth can take with him is neatness of apparel. A man's character betrays itself not a little in his dress. No shrewd employer, without very weighty counterbalancing reasons, will place a youth in a situation of trust and confidence, whose outward appearance bespeaks either a careless sloven or a conceited fop. Neatness is the medium between extremes. It is inexpensive, and may be shown alike in the coarse vestments of the laboring man and amid the smoke and dust of the busy workshop. "If I were out of employment, with only a dollar in the world (and if I did n't have a dollar, I would go out and earn one)," said the head of a great firm, — recently quoted in a New York magazine, — who has risen from an office boy to his present position, "I would spend it all in an hour. I would divide most of that dollar between a shave, a bath, and a shine. With the remainder I would buy the best meal I could get. I might have to carry a hod for my next meal."

Even a matter seemingly so trivial as bad spelling may prove a stumbling-block to a seeker for employment. A single misspelled word once prevented a young man from obtaining a situation as instructor in a New England college. Bad spelling, even of some of the simplest words — such as *to* for *too* — is not uncommon in our colleges. The name *Cyrus*, for instance, was spelled in more than twenty different ways

by students competing for entrance to Harvard College in one year.

A bad handwriting, especially when the pothooks are illegible, is a still greater hindrance to success. Some young men think that care about their chirography is beneath their notice. Not so thought the great parliamentary orator, Charles James Fox. It is said that when made secretary of state, he was so piqued at some criticism of his penmanship, that he actually engaged a writing master, and wrote copies like a schoolboy until he had acquired a good hand. Henry Clews, the New York banker, who employs about one hundred and fifty young men, recently stated in "Success" that he invariably asks young men who apply to him for clerkships, to make their applications in their own handwriting. He advises young men who seek positions "to practice good penmanship. It is a valuable thing," he adds, — "almost a necessity." The first position Mr. Clews held in New York, that of assistant bookkeeper of Wilson G. Hunt and Company, he obtained because of his penmanship. "The manager of an immense business," says a writer in the "Youth's Companion," "declares that *it costs his house \$25,000 a year to correct errors in invoices and other papers, mistakes due to poor writing and poor English.*"

A frequent foe to the advancement of young men in a bank, department store, or other great establishment, is the practice of looking often at the clock. Of two clerks, one of whom arrives at his post not one minute before the time, and goes away not one minute later, and another who arrives ahead of time, and works later, if there is anything that needs to be done, is there any doubt which has the better chance

of advancement? Can we wonder that the clerk who is constantly watching the clock to see how soon he can be released from labor, and who, when it strikes the hour, instantly seizes his hat and departs, is regarded as taking little interest in his work, and caring little to please his employer, and that, as a bank president says, "He remains a clerk all his life, and at fifty is antiquated." How different the spirit and destiny of such a man from that of Charles M. Schwab, who, when he worked for the Carnegie Steel Company as a day laborer, said, "If I get a chance, I mean to be president of this concern some day. I will show my employer that I am anxious to earn promotion. I am going to do more than I am paid for — more than is expected of me." Is it strange that such a man should advance — not by great jumps, but by regular, steady steps — from the position of stage-driver to that of the head of the greatest combination of capital and industry that the world has known?

In addressing the students of a trade school in New York, Mr. Schwab said, "No matter what business you take up, if you want to succeed, you must do what you have to do a little better than any one about you, so that the attention of your superiors will be attracted to you. Simply doing your duty will not do, for every one is expected to do his duty. You must do a little more than your duty. You cannot make people believe you are interested in your work, if you do not."

Another frequent hindrance to success is inattention to opportunities. Sir Walter Besant once related a striking instance of this that fell under his notice. A gentleman controlling a large business called a number of his clerks before him, and told them that

in about six months the establishment would want a clerk thoroughly versed in shorthand. The clerk best fitted for the place when the time should arrive would be appointed, and his salary doubled. At the end of the six months, the same clerks were again summoned to meet the head of the firm ; and how many, think you, reader, had taken the pains meanwhile to master shorthand ? Not one.

Is it strange that young men fail to get on, who are found by their employers or clients to be habitually or frequently unpunctual ? Punctuality is the hinge of business — the soul of successful effort ; and on each man's exactness in doing his special part in a great banking-house, factory, or department store, depends the easy going of the whole machine. We all like a punctual man, who respects his word, and has a regard for our convenience ; we dislike an unpunctual man, because he interferes with our plans, wastes our time, causes uneasy feelings, and implicitly tells us that we are not of sufficient importance, in his estimation, to make him prompt. Punctuality has reference to time engagements, money engagements, and engagements for work. It is a quality that is usually found in connection with other good qualities, as the want of it argues the absence of other essential habits. One of the highest recommendations that can be given of a young man to an employer, is that he can always be depended on to do what is expected of him, and to begin it at the very hour, as the clock strikes. John Kemble, the celebrated tragedian, was once asked why he rarely played without giving a part to a performer who was notoriously a very stiff and formal actor. He replied, " That man is indispensable. If I see his foot on a given nail in the stage floor, as I repeat a

certain line of my part to-night, I can depend on finding it there to-morrow night at the very same word." Now "all the world's a stage," and men like this actor, though of mediocre talents, who are as trusty one day as another, can always count upon employment.

It is said that a British manufacturer was once about to establish an agency in London, and was at a loss, in choosing his representative, to decide between two young men, one an industrious plodder, always punctual to the minute, the other a brilliant, popular man, who did his work well and easily, but who rarely kept his appointments promptly. Finally the employer invited both of these young men to dine with him on a certain evening at exactly seven o'clock. The plodder presented himself to his host as the clock was striking, and they two immediately sat down to dinner. Five minutes later the other guest appeared with a laughing apology for being late, which, he said, was entirely the fault of his watch. On the following day the London appointment, with a large increase of salary, was given to him who had learned the business value of promptness.

Charles M. Schwab, president of the United Steel Corporation at Pittsburg, Pa., in addressing the St. George Evening Trade School in New York city, gave the following striking illustrations of the profitability of punctuality. "Dr. Rainsford has spoken of the experience of a boy who quit work because his salary was not increased soon enough. I know that very banker that he stopped working for, and only yesterday I was sitting in his office with him, when a newsboy came in and handed him a paper, for which he received a penny. When the boy had gone, the

banker turned to me and said, 'Every day for more than a year that boy has come into this office punctually at three o'clock and delivered to me the paper. I have never given him more than one penny for the paper, yet he has never varied a minute from the appointed time. I feel that a boy who does his work so faithfully and well is deserving of some recognition. He has something in him, and I am going to give him a position in my banking-house.' As the years go by, I predict that that boy will rise to the head of that great banking-house. For example: I knew an old man in Pennsylvania once, the head of a great manufacturing concern, who went to his foreman and asked him to recommend one of the boys there for a superior position which was vacant. The foreman said that all the boys were good. 'But there must be one better than the others,' said the employer. 'It is now five o'clock, quitting time. Tell all the boys to work until six o'clock.' The ten boys went to work willingly enough, but, as the clock pointed near six o'clock, nine of the boys began to cast glances at it. The tenth boy was too busy to look at the clock, and he got the promotion. That boy now controls an establishment working thirty thousand men. Eighteen years ago there was a fifteen-year-old boy employed in carrying drinking water to the men in some steel-works. He did his work so well, however, and always had such cool water and was so diligent in looking after the men's wants, that he attracted the attention of the workmen. A little later an office-boy was needed, and this boy was remembered and rewarded with the job. There he pursued the same policy, and in five years a superintendent's assistant was needed. He was given the place. A little later he became manager, then super-

intendent, and now he is the president of the Carnegie Steel Company, employing sixty thousand men. That water-boy is now President Cory."

To be always a little behind time, instead of being a slave to the clock, has sometimes been considered a mark of dignity and self-respect by little great men. Not so with the really great men. Washington and Wellington were punctual, and insisted on punctuality in others. Napoleon was punctual, and esteemed that quality as of vital importance in military operations. Blackstone was not only punctual himself, but could never be made to think well of any man notoriously defective in this virtue. It is related of a modern British peer, on whose shoulders a kingdom seemed to be resting, — who presided in the House of Lords and in the Court of Chancery, gave audience daily to barristers, and found time to be at the head of not less than ten associations, — that he was so punctual that when the associations met, he was invariably at his post in the chair when the clock struck the hour for opening the meeting.

A golden rule of life for a young man, and for all men, is to do always more and better than you have agreed to do. Work for your employer over rather than under the time stipulated. Give excessive rather than scant measure to your customers. Some years ago the New York "Tribune" wisely said that faithfulness, though commendable, is after all but a negative virtue, and that a young man who has no higher claim upon his employer stands a poor chance of promotion, although, if he is not faithful, he is sure to lose his place. "The secret of success," adds the writer, "is in doing a great deal more than one's duty. As a rule, every employer stands ready to recognize ability.

The thousand-dollar-a-year young man who keeps showing that he is worth two thousand is bound, in the nature of things, to get the promotion he deserves. Nothing can keep him down. . . . The question of his employer will be, not how his services may be dispensed with, but how they may be retained." Nothing can be truer than these words. They deserve to be printed in letters of gold, and to be read and inwardly digested by every beginner of business in the land.

Finally, do not be too sensitive. An excess of this quality, in all callings a hindrance, is in some professions an absolute bar to success. Persons thus afflicted have a hard struggle to get a foothold in their callings. To get on in this age of fierce competition, when only the fittest survive the exhausting contest, a man should not feel too keenly the rubs and jolts and jars of life. He should be able to put up with a good deal of snubbing and rudeness, and often "stoop to conquer." Besides this imperturbability, a certain amount of reticence is desirable. He should not show his hand, but be capable of being at times close, sudden, and decisive. Again, at the start he should not be over-nice in looking out for what may exactly suit him, but be ready to seize and take advantage of any opportunities for self-advancement that may occur. Fortune shows herself to every man once or twice, at least, in his life ; but she is on the wing, and seldom stoops to pick any one up.

CHAPTER XL

SPECTRAL DISCOURAGEMENTS

“No man ever sunk under the burden of the day. It is when to-morrow’s burden is added to the burden of to-day, that the burden is more than a man can bear.” — GEORGE MACDONALD.

EVERY man, at the outset of a career, has to encounter certain spectres of despair — hobgoblins that need only to have the light of reason turned upon them to make them vanish from his sight. One of these ghostly discouragements is *poverty*. “I can never rise in the world ; I am poor !” is the cry of many an able-bodied but faint-hearted young man, when urged to struggle for the prizes of life — to raise himself from a lowly position, and make himself useful to his fellow-men. This plea might be admissible, did experience show that poverty, even the most abject, even when added to humble birth and lack of friends, need keep any man from longing and striving for a respectable, and even a high and honorable, place among his fellows. But what is the fact ? The biographies of eminent men of all ages and countries prove the contrary — nay, prove that low birth and grinding poverty may both be converted to positive blessings by a determined will. They teem with examples showing that the humblest man, if he will but make the most of his abilities, may do much for the glory of God and the good of man ; that giant deeds may be performed by seeming pygmies ; that there is no social dwarf who may not become a moral Hercules.

You are miserably poor, you say, without a friend to help you. But are you poorer than the carpenter's son, who rose to be Pope Gregory the Seventh, the mightiest of the pontiffs? Are you poorer than Martin Luther, the obscure monk, who split in twain the Catholic Church, or than his still obscurer countryman, who by the invention of printing revolutionized the whole intellectual aspect of society? Are you poorer than was Alexander Murray, the eminent linguist, who, when a youth, learned to write by scribbling letters on an old wool card, with the end of a burnt heather stem? Are you more indigent than was Lord Kenyon, chief justice of England, who began life as a bootblack and an errand boy? Are you more friendless than John Leyden, the brilliant scholar, who, when a poor, barefooted boy, walked six or eight miles across the Scotch moors to learn to read; who, amid the abjectest penury, haunted Constable's bookstore in Edinburgh, and passed hour after hour perched on a ladder in mid-air with some great folio in his hand, forgetful of the scanty meal of bread and water which awaited him in his lowly lodgings?

Are you more needy than was Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the electric telegraph, who, on the very eve of his triumph, wrote to his mother: "I am crushed for want of means; my stockings all want to see mother, and my hat is hoary from age"? Is your environment more depressing than was that of the great journalist and politician, Thurlow Weed, who cultivated his mind while tending "sap-bush;" who tramped through the snow shoeless, with his feet swaddled in the remnants of a rag carpet, to borrow Carlyle's "French Revolution," which he read by the light of "fat pine"? Are you more forlorn than was

Henry Wilson in his boyhood, — he who for eighteen years was senator in Congress, and was vice-president of the United States? He toiled and drudged as a farmer's apprentice from daylight till dark, from ten years of age until he was twenty-one, — spending, as he himself affirmed, but one dollar from the day he was born till he attained to manhood — and yet he read during those dreary years a thousand borrowed volumes of history, biography, and philosophy.

Poverty did not prevent the poor, scrofulous, melancholy Samuel Johnson, who went up to London with but a guinea in his pocket, from rising to literary eminence. It did not prevent Schliemann from becoming the first palæontologist of his time; nor Edward Sugden, a barber's son, from becoming one of England's greatest lawyers, with an income of one hundred thousand dollars a year, and lord chancellor of England. It did not keep Samuel Lee, of Shropshire, England, a carpenter's apprentice, from learning the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, Hindostanee, and other languages, and becoming a famed professor in the University of Cambridge. Poverty could not keep in obscurity Garfield, the canal boy; nor Linnæus, the naturalist, in spite of the fact that he had to prosecute his studies while hammering leather and making shoes. Indigence did not hinder Velpeau from becoming the most illustrious figure in French surgery, albeit he was a blacksmith's son; nor Littré, the learned translator of Hippocrates, from rising to eminence amid the most depressing discouragements; nor Professor Moor from making his mark in the world, though, when a young man, he had not money to buy Newton's "*Principia*," and had to copy the whole of that great work with his own hand.

"Chill penury" did not "repress the noble rage" of Jean Paul Richter, but even when in the clutches of a remorseless creditor, he wrote to a friend, "What is poverty that a man should whine under it? It is but the pain of piercing the ears of the maiden, and you hang precious jewels in the wound."

To you who are beginning a career we would say, — what though you are a poor man's son, and have felt the gripe of want until, as Daniel Webster said of his condition in youth, your very bones ached? What though you may be steeped in poverty to the very lips, yet is your environment one whit more depressing than that of the heroic souls we have named? But all these men rose superior to their discouragements, and converted even the obstacles in their way into stepping-stones to success. Why may not such a triumph be yours? Summon up your manhood, then; shake off your despondency, doubts, and fears, and say, "God helping me, I *will* succeed." Say, with Balzac in his garret, when told that in literature, which he had chosen for his calling, a man must either be king or hodman, "Very well, I will be king!" — and by steady, unrelenting toil, backed by hopefulness and self-trust, victory may be yours.

Another hobgoblin of many young men who need only faith in themselves, courage, and persistence to succeed, is their small or mediocre talents. Had they the brilliant abilities of Jones or Brown, or some other successful men they know, they would strive for the world's prizes. But are such abilities needed? One of the noblest utterances of the late William E. Gladstone is his observation that "in some sense, and in some effectual degree, there is in every man the material for good work, — not only in those who are brilliant,

not only in those who are quick, but in those who are stolid, and even in those who are dull." These are golden words, that should be taken to heart by every young man who is despondent on account of his mediocre or mean ability. All experience shows that there is nothing in this fact which should dishearten any beginner in a calling. It is not brilliant ability, but resolution and persistence that, as a rule, win the prizes of life. It is proverbial that "slow but sure wins the race." A tortoise on the right road will beat a race horse on the wrong road. Slowness is far less a foe to success than sloth. Quickness of parts often proves a disadvantage, since a boy who acquires knowledge quickly will often forget it as quickly, and again, because he sees no necessity for that strenuous application and dogged perseverance which a dull, slow youth is compelled to manifest, and which are the surest means of success in every career.

It is a notorious fact that worldly success depends far less upon the general superiority of one's intellectual forces than on special adaptation to the work in hand. Moderate talent, steadily applied, will achieve more useful results, and, in the end, win higher respect, than ability of a high order whose temper is too fine for the drudgery and mechanical parts of a profession. The astonishing variety of talents which some men display is often acquired at the dear price of comparative feebleness in every part.

In reading biographies of eminent men, one is surprised to learn what great things have been achieved by men who in youth were pronounced dunces. Histories of their careers are full of encouragement to timid, self-distrustful beginners in life. Among the illustrious dunces — dull and even stupid boys, but

most successful men — were Justus von Liebig, called “Booby Liebig” by his schoolmates, who, when he replied to a question by his teacher, said that he intended to be a chemist, and provoked a burst of derision from the whole school, yet lived to become one of the greatest chemists of the nineteenth century; Tommaso Guidi, the great painter, — the precursor of Raphael, — whose works were studied by the latter and by Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci, yet who was known as “Heavy Tom” when a boy; Thomas Chatterton, who was sent home from school as “a fool, of whom nothing can be made;” Isaac Barrow, a quick-tempered, pugnacious, and idle boy at school, but in manhood a celebrated mathematician and preacher; Dean Swift, “plucked” at Dublin University; Richard B. Sheridan, the brilliant wit, playwright, and orator, but “an incorrigible dunce” at school; Thomas Chalmers, one of Great Britain’s most noted pulpit orators; John Howard, the noted philanthropist; and even William Jones, who, besides writing various legal and other solid works, distinguished himself as a judge in India, and, at his death, at the early age of forty-eight years, had mastered twenty-eight languages.

Not less illustrious than this roll of dunces were Robert Burns, a dull learner at school; Adam Clarke, “a grievous dunce,” as his father said, in his boyhood, but who lived to become an acute, learned, and eminent commentator on the Bible; the “dull scholar,” Napoleon; and Wellington, characterized by his mother as “a dunce, who was only food for powder;” “Useless” Grant, as Ulysses was termed by his mother; and Robert Clive, “the heaven-born general,” as Lord Chatham styled him, who, a dunce at school, was sent,

to get rid of him, as a clerk to India, proud, poor, and irritable, but who entered the British army, rose to high command, and with three thousand two hundred troops, defeated, at Plassey, a native army of sixty-eight thousand men with fifty pieces of cannon, and laid the foundations of that mighty oriental empire which has been the source of such enormous wealth to Great Britain. Last but not least, perhaps the most marvelous blockhead of all in the long roll, was Walter Scott, of whom his teacher, Professor Andrew Dalzell, said that "dunce he is, and dunce he will remain," and who, visiting the school when at the zenith of his fame, asked to see its dunce, and when taken to him, gave him a half-sovereign, saying, "There, take that, for keeping my seat warm."

Let no young man, therefore, despond or despair of success in his calling, because he thinks he has little ability. He may be mistaken; but if not, his one talent, if carefully cultivated and strengthened, may win for him an enviable success. If he is dull, his dullness may be but temporary; like Oliver Goldsmith, he may be one of those plants that flower late. Like Stephen A. Douglas, when he was studying law, he may be slow in grasping a principle; but, as with "the little giant," when it is once grasped, it may be his own forever. The author of "Self-Formation," a work full of inspiration and ripe wisdom, which, when published in 1837 by Charles Knight, fell almost dead from the press, but which we wish could be read by every young man who cares for self-culture, goes so far in the following stirring passage as to say that, if he were to begin life anew, he would actually prefer to start as a dunce rather than as a genius. "Above all else," he says, "away with the cabalistic

nonsense of the prerogative of the man of genius, the predominance of the natal star. If the plea of inability to rise above his nature is good for the dunce, it is good for the knave also. For myself, I declare solemnly . . . that, if I were to begin life anew, without any other experience than the certainty, such as I now hold it, of intellectual *quasi*-perfectibility, I should choose to begin it as a dunce rather than as a boy of genius. The certainty that I have spoken of would sustain me and animate me, and move me in my endeavors to improve myself from the lowest to the highest rank ; and I should have all the pleasure of the pursuit, — an inestimable pleasure in such a region, — together with the conscious anticipation of success, the assurance of the crowning glory.”

There is another class of young men who start off confidently in the race of life, but at the first serious mishap are disheartened. After some years of steadily increasing success, they have been suddenly stripped by a financial panic, or the bankruptcy of their debtors, of all their earnings, and they cry out that they are “ruined.” One of the most pitiful things in this world is to see a man who has met with such a disaster, but who has health, vigor, and character, lie down in despair, and utter this doleful cry. *Ruined!* How is he ruined, when he has larger means for winning an independence or a fortune than he had when he first started in business? Then, perhaps, he had no capital but his mental and bodily gifts ; now he has, besides these, all the invaluable experience — the knowledge and tact — which he has acquired in his business. Shipwrecked, is he? Why, the very wrecks of a noble, ambitious enterprise are something, and out of them he may construct a raft that will bear

him above the billows. All is not lost, though it is common in such cases to say that it is. There is a capital in the heads of men, in their acquired experience and skill, which remains unimpaired even in the worst failures.

What should we think of a sea captain who, because his ship had become unseaworthy, should refuse to save his life in the longboat? If a business man has been stripped of house and land, money and stocks, is he also robbed of his five senses, — of his muscular strength, his dexterity of hand, his knowledge of the arts of buying and selling to advantage, his spotless reputation? Unless he is, and has suddenly been transformed into a mere torpid lump of animal life, with a mouth to be fed and no means of gaining food, how can he be considered as ruined? If he has preserved, amidst the most trying temptations, his good repute, — a reputation for sterling integrity, — he has a cork jacket sufficient to buoy him up and keep him afloat. With his honor saved, the talisman of fortune still remains in his hand, — like the ring of Aladdin when he wandered forlorn through the desert, — ready to be used for the restoration of his fortune. With that only, he is rich; without it, Rockefeller would be poor. Cowley says, "The poor rich man's emphatically poor." A profession of indifference to riches is generally hypocritical; but it is certain that they are not essential to happiness. There is a point beyond which all that a man can gain contributes little to positive enjoyment. Bacon says truly that a large fortune is of no solid use to the owner except to increase his means of giving. "The rest is but conceit; the personal fruition in any man cannot reach to feel great riches."

When Walter Scott was suddenly reduced from affluence to poverty, and compelled to exchange his lordly mansion and lands — the acquisition of which had prompted and lightened his Titanic toils — for a furnished lodging, did he lie down and groan that he was ruined? No; he told his condoling friends that he was then happier, in many respects, than for a considerable time before his bankruptcy. His real wants and comforts were as effectually cared for, he said, as ever, — all that he lacked was the trappings. Before his bankruptcy he had lived, in a great measure, for others; but now his house, his income, and his time were all his own. The wearisome, costly ceremonial character he had so long been obliged to support was cast off, and he had become a free, independent man. So, doubtless, has it been with hundreds and thousands of men who have fancied themselves ruined by financial cyclones which have swept away all the earnings and savings of years, but who have found at last that, when they were flat on their backs, they were just beginning *to look up*. With Eliza Cook, they could sing: —

“ We may be poor; but, then, I guess,
Our trouble with our pomp is less,
And they who wear a russet dress
May never fear the tumbling.
And though champagne froth never hums
Between our fingers and our thumbs,
Red apoplexy seldom comes
To dine with plain stone dumpling.”

CHAPTER XLI

BE HOPEFUL

"No hope so bright but is the beginning of its own fulfillment." —
EMERSON.

"Hope is a leaf-joy, which may be beaten out to a great extension, like gold." — BACON.

THE value of hopefulness as an element of worldly success is well known. "*Magnæ indolis est signum sperare semper*" (It is a sign of a great nature to be ever hopeful), says Florus. "*L'espoir est ma force*" is the fine heraldic motto on a broken helmet in Battle Abbey, which every man — and especially every beginner in a career — might well adopt. The man who is stripping for the race of life should meditate all cheerful things, and sing the song of battle which has a thousand times fired the souls of his predecessors, and spurred them on to victory. The pulse should beat high, as if he were in actual battle and the sound of the trumpet rang in his ears. An intense anticipation changes possibility into reality, our hopes being often the precursors of things we are capable of achieving. Hopefulness makes the spirits elastic; spectres fly before it; and hence the buoyant, sunny man is not easily overcome. "Though he falleth seven times, yet will he rise again." Like Coligni, he may lose four great battles, and yet show to the enemy a more formidable front than before. On the other hand, how inevitable is the failure of the man

whose spirit is broken ! It is like breaking the main-spring of a watch, or the chief movement of an ingeniously constructed and complicated machine. Chamfort, the French wit and epigrammatist, quotes M. de Lassay as saying that it would be necessary to swallow a toad every morning, in order not to find anything disgusting for the rest of the day, where one has to spend it in the world. How can such a man apply himself with energy to his daily tasks ?

What greater blessing can fall to a man's lot than a sunny, hopeful disposition, — a stout heart that quails before no trials ? "Woe unto him that is faint-hearted !" says the son of Sirach. What is a statesman without hopefulness ? As a future leader of the Liberal party in England, John Morley stands in intellectual power and popularity next to Gladstone ; but if he fails to become a first-class statesman, a principal cause of the failure, according to a friendly critic, Justin McCarthy, M. P., will be his *lack of hopefulness*, his inclination to a certain pessimism in politics, and a lack of animal spirits ; for, as Mr. McCarthy says, "it would be hard to overrate the importance of animal spirits in the big struggles, the rough-and-tumble fights, of English Parliamentary life." Hope and faith are as essential to the doing of great deeds as pure air is essential to health and vigor. "In every human condition," says Goethe, "foes lie in wait for us, invincible except by cheerfulness and equanimity." Pessimism handicaps a man in the race of life, cuts the nerve of all effort, and conjures up imaginary foes and obstacles, which dissolve into thin air before a sunny temperament. "Let him who would have me for a listener," says the great thinker just quoted (who in subtle and varied obser-

vation of human life has had no equal since Bacon), "speak positively. Of the problematical I have enough within myself." "All strong natures," observes a recent writer, "long for positive things, for contact with realities, for faiths that one can build on, for convictions that are as rock under one's feet. . . . The great souls are always positive and creative. They probably know a thousand times more of the depths of gloom that underlie life than the professional pessimist; but they also have faith in the light which scatters the darkness, and in the achievement which makes life a reality instead of a lie."

Hopefulness is all-important in the religious life. "An ounce of cheerfulness is worth a pound of sadness to serve God with," says wise Thomas Fuller. Half the battle of the spiritual life consists in keeping up a cheerful spirit. How many Christians fail just at this point! "I can find a hundred zealous, working Christians," says a writer, "where I can find a single Christian who, under the o'erbrooding love of God, sits like a robin on its bough, singing and swinging, without one trouble in its heart, one discord in its minstrelsy." No one can contend successfully with his spiritual foes so long as his soul is full of forebodings and his mind of prophecies of defeat. Our religious life often languishes, not because we are not sincere and earnest, or because we do things antagonistic to it, but because we do everything under a cloud. Hope is wanting. There is no enthusiasm — no *élan*, no spring, no eager looking for and vision of speedy success. "When you break a Christian's spirit," says the Rev. F. W. Robertson, "it is all over with progress. Oh, we want everything that is hopeful and encouraging for our work, for God knows that it

is not an easy one." An English devotional writer, quoted with approbation by Dean Goulburn in his admirable "Thoughts on Personal Religion," answers the question, "How are we to overcome temptations?" by saying, "Cheerfulness is the first thing, cheerfulness is the second, and cheerfulness is the third." No truer words have been written. Faint heart never won anything that was worth winning, while victories have been won against fearful odds and under the most desperate circumstances by troops that have been suddenly flushed with confidence and enthusiasm.

It was said of Oliver Cromwell, that hope shone like a fiery pillar in his soul when it had gone out of all others. In like manner it was said of Sir John Malcolm, when he appeared in a saddened camp in India, that "it was like a gleam of sunlight. . . . No man left him without a smile on his face." It was because in the most frightful of circumstances he was cheerful as the day, that Nelson won his victories. It was the beaming, hopeful countenance of Henry of Navarre — lion in war, winner of hearts, bravest of the brave — as he rode down the ranks at Ivry, when Papist and Protestant were face to face, and his life and freedom were at stake, that inspirited his troops and led them to follow his white plume till they had routed his foes. It is the same lightness and brightness of heart, the same inexhaustible elasticity of spirit, that must be possessed by the soldier of Jesus Christ if he would break through the serried ranks of his spiritual foes. It was the buoyancy and merry temper of Luther that bore him up in his conflicts with Rome, and enabled him to triumph under the most appalling circumstances. At one time in his life, his elasticity of spirits, usually so extraordinary,

for a short time failed him. He was sorely vexed and tried, he says, by his own sinfulness, by the wickedness of the world, and by the dangers that beset the Church. "One morning I saw my wife dressed in mourning. Surprised, I asked her who had died. 'Do you not know?' she replied. 'God in heaven is dead.' 'How can you talk such nonsense, Katie?' I said. 'How can God die? Why, he is immortal, and will live through all eternity.' 'Is that really true?' she asked. 'Of course,' I said, still not perceiving what she was driving at; 'how can you doubt it? As sure as there is a God in heaven, so sure am I that He can never die.' 'And yet,' she said, 'though you do not doubt that God lives, you are so hopeless and discouraged!' Then I perceived what a wise woman my wife was, and mastered my sadness."

INDEX

- Ability, average, has little value, 39, 40.
- Addison, Joseph, on luck, 25; his shyness, 360.
- Affluence, its enervating effects, 342.
- Ainsworth, Robert, burning of his dictionary, 157.
- Alexander, Joseph Addison, D. D., quoted, 238.
- Alford, Dean, on important moments, 261.
- Allen, Grant, on great artists and writers, 109.
- Allston, Washington, anecdote of, 294.
- Americans, their struggle with England, 160, 161.
- Amiel, on his lack of practical talent, 207.
- Angelo, Michael, in childhood, 29; a Titanic worker, 156; his toils, 168.
- Apprenticeship essential to proficiency, 301.
- Arkwright, Richard, his perseverance, 154, 155.
- Arnold, Thomas, D. D., his energy, 91; depressed by monotonous scenery, 257.
- Artists, secret of their success, 109.
- Athanasius, 56.
- Attention to little things, 245-250.
- Audubon, his loss of his drawings, 156.
- Australia, college graduates in, 205.
- Austria, Empress of, her omnivorous reading, 167.
- Bacon, his use of leisure hours, 234; on dispatch, 331.
- Baillie, E. J., 235.
- Balzac, on forgetting misfortunes, 145; his toils, 262; saying of, 380.
- Barrow, Isaac, D. D., in boyhood, 382.
- Baxter, Richard, D. D., his diseases and colossal achievements, 57, 58.
- Baynes, Thomas Spencer, 63.
- Be, and rely upon, yourself, 125-137.
- Beginners in life, their complaints of their slow progress, 16; advice to, 16; their discouragements, 340, 345.
- Be hopeful, 387-391.
- Bell, Alexander G., on successful men, 333.
- Bentham, Jeremy, an economist of time, 235; quoted, 317.
- Bernard of Clairvaux, 56.
- Besant, Sir Walter, on inattention to opportunities, 372.
- Biddle, Nicholas, 313.
- Blackie, Professor John Stuart, anecdote told by him, 151.
- Boileau, 36.
- Books, their value, 128; not to be slavishly read, 128.
- Borgia, Caesar, and Pope Alexander, their attempt to poison Cardinal Commetto, 21.
- Brain-work, fallacies about it, 278-280; its healthfulness, 278-280.
- Brown, Joseph E., Governor, his tenacity of purpose, 151, 152.
- Browne, Sir Thomas, quoted, 208, 331.
- Brougham, Lord, his talents sure of recognition, 25; his toughness, 44; his energy, 79; characteristics of his oratory, 89.
- Budgell, Samuel, his early history, 298.
- Buffon, Count, his persistent industry, 153; an early riser, 281.
- Bulwer, Sir Henry, 45.
- Bulwer (Lord Lytton), the secret of his successes, 70; on intensity in writing, 103; on self-reform, 316.
- Burke, Edmund, quoted, 24; on despair, 149.
- Burney, Charles, M. D., 234.
- Burns, Robert, dull at school, 382.

- Byron, his volcanic brain, 13.
- Burritt, Elihu, an economist of time, 235.
- Buxton, Sir T. Fowell, on his concentration, 70; his energy, 95, 96; on energy, 52.
- Caesar, Julius, his apparent good luck, 24; his ill health, 65; energy his main quality, 84; his thoroughness, 197; his readiness, 185.
- Calling, choice of one's, 23-40; Emerson on, 28; dangers of mistaking one's, 31-33; the best, slow in yielding a return, 35; every desirable one difficult, 34; when to be changed, 34, 35; practice will make any one pleasant, 37; escaping an uncongenial one, 38; easy ones ill paid, 39.
- Calvin, John, 62.
- Carey, William, D. D., missionary, his persistence, 151.
- Carlyle, Thomas, on the intensity of life's race, 6; his ill health, 47; his advice to Edinburgh students, 47, 48; on work, 162; his manuscript burned, 156; on mental development, 334; anecdote of, 223, 224.
- Carr, Peter, his ill luck, 23.
- Carter, Elizabeth, an early riser, 232.
- Castille, Le, Abbé, 30.
- Cecil, Richard, on spiritual energy, 80.
- Chalmers, Thomas, D. D., the unity of his discourses, 69; dull at school, 382.
- Chambers, Robert, his anecdote of a Scotch tailor, 267.
- Chamfort, Nicolas, on the Anti-Revolutionary Alliance, 192.
- Channing, W. E., D. D., 56; his thoroughness in study, 110, 111; on self-culture, 237.
- Chantrey, sculptor, 29, 295.
- Character, its value, 16, 307-314; governs the world, 307; defined, 307; Lowell on, 308; Chesterfield on, 308; the motive power of society, 308; its value underrated, 308; Colonel Chatterton on, 309; influence of some great men's, 310; more potent than ability, 310; Francis Horner's, 311; Dr. Franklin's, Washington's, 311; is property, 312.
- Charlemagne, 208.
- Chatham, Lord, collapse of his ministry, 49; his energy, 85; his oratorical fire, 88.
- Chatterton, Thomas, his ill luck, 22; his dullness at school, 382.
- Cheerfulness, to be cultivated, 251-259; Hume on it, 251; a condition of the best work, 252; Carlyle on it, 252; its possessors not weak-minded, 253; great mental power unfriendly to it, 253; of Fénelon, Jeremy Taylor, and Fielding, 254; of Walter Scott and Sydney Smith, 255; Ruskin on it, 255; susceptible of culture, 256; affected by environment, climate, and scenery, 256; promoted by exercise, 257; its foes, 257; aided by a good conscience, 258; increases capacity for labor, 258; contagious, 258; in combating temptations, 390; Sir John Malcolm's, 390.
- Chesterfield, his advice to lawyers, 75; his concentration, 89; on the Duke of Newcastle, 192; his advice to his son, 198, 200; unjustly ridiculed, 300; on character, 308; on his own shyness, 362, 366.
- Choate, Rufus, 14; his advice to lawyers, 75; his concentration, 89.
- Circumstances, their influence on men's careers, 23, 24; how to control adverse, 24.
- Clark, Alvan, his patience and thoroughness, 110.
- Clarke, J. F., D. D., on habits of thoroughness, 112; on the culture of the will, 123.
- Clay, Henry, his early declamations, 297.
- Clews, Henry, on penmanship, 370.
- Clive, Robert, his achievements, 382, 383.
- Cobden, Richard, on luck, 24.
- Coleridge, Hartley, on weakness of will, 124.
- Coleridge, S. T., his opium-eating, 43.
- College students, causes of their ill health, 279.
- Commonplace truths, Renan on, 218.
- Competition, its sharpness to-day, 5.
- Complaints of beginners in life, 348.
- Concentration, necessary to success, 63; Darwin's, 68; Macaulay, on his own,

- 69; T. Fowell Buxton on, 69; not monotony of action, 75.
- Constant, Benjamin, his career a failure, 314.
- Constitution, how to acquire a good bodily, 52.
- Cook, Eliza, on poverty, 386.
- Cooper, James Fenimore, his first novel, 296.
- Cottle, Joseph, his anecdote of Coleridge and Wordsworth, 208, 209.
- Courtesy, its characteristics, 201; its source, 201; Goethe and Henry Clay on, 250.
- Cowardice, may be overcome, 122.
- Cowper, William, 62; his shyness, 361.
- Cromwell, Oliver, began life humbly, 295; his saying to a lawyer, 308; his regiment of "Ironsides," 313.
- Curran, John Philpot, 32; his sadness, 254.
- Cuvier, his great work, 234.
- Cuyler, Theodore L., D. D., on staying power, 145.
- D'Alembert, his reply to a student, 344.
- D'Aguesseau, his economy of time, 232.
- Dante, his great poem, 333.
- Darwin, Charles, 60; his concentration of effort, 68, 156; his utilization of time, 234.
- Dandolo, Doge of Venice, 65.
- Dean, Dudley, his good luck, 22.
- Death, Captain, 122.
- Decision, of character, 115-124; Bacon on, 115; Sydney Smith on, 115; Suvaroff on, 116; its need in the learned professions, 116; in trade, 116; Louis XVI.'s lack of it, 117; incompatible with mental breadth, 118; its value to writers, 118; important in war, 118; Napoleon's, 118, 119; Admiral Farragut's, 119; Caesar's, 119; Thomas Fowell Buxton's, 120, 121; Emerson on, 121.
- Defects, petty, 316.
- De Maistre, Count Joseph, on learning languages, 83; his commonplace-books, 90, 91.
- Demosthenes, quoted, 88; his energy in oratory, 88.
- De Quincey, Thomas, 62; ruined by opium, 43; his estimate of a man's time for self-culture, 229.
- De Staël, Madame, her request of Hegel, 338.
- Dickens, Charles, his Christmas Stories, 103; his public readings, 110; his persistence, 148; his preparation for his public readings, 167; his start as a novelist, 296.
- Difficulties and obstacles, often blessings, 130, 131, 341-343.
- Diocletian, 208.
- Diplomatists, taught by failures, 346.
- Dodd, William, D. D., anecdote of his wife, 197.
- Douglas, Stephen A., his mental traits, 383.
- Dress, its connection with success, 369.
- Drudgery, required in every calling, 82; involved in the best work, 172.
- Dunces, illustrious, 381-383.
- Earnestness, Charlotte Cushman on, 94; triumphs over difficulty, 104.
- Early rising, of eminent men and women, 281, 282; Dr. Johnson on it, 281; its advantages, 282, 283; Macaulay on it, 283; arguments against it, 284; its difficulty, 284-286; how to acquire the habit, 285.
- Eastlake, Sir Charles, 23.
- Economy, the wealth of, 217-225; the condition of wealth and independence; American lack of, 218-220; of the French and Chinese, 219, 226; Washington's, 223; Carlyle's, 223; regarded as meanness, 224; shabby deeds of its despisers, 224; our Saviour's, 225; Nature's, 225; aided by science, 225, 226; practiced on some railways, 227; may be overdone, 228; examples of extreme, 228; false, 244; extreme sometimes excusable, 244; the secret of riches, 246.
- Edison, Thomas A., his invention of the telephone, 26; a great worker, 168.
- Eldon, Lord, 13; saying of, 89.
- Eliot, George, her "Romola," 103.
- Ellenborough, Lord, 13.
- Ellsworth, Oliver, 262.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, on the tasks of beginners in life, 6; on men's vocations, 28; on concentration of effort, 67; on energy, 79; on force in writing, 91, 103; on thoroughness in work, 108;

- on tenacity of purpose, 146; his saying on success combated, 121; quoted, 126; his advice to a young lecturer, 127; on the use of books, 127; on rude men, 197; on the world's judgment days, 310; on a certain "shallow Americanism," 337.
- Employment, lack of, 292, 293.
- Energy, 78-98; Arnold of Rugby on its importance, 78; necessary to supremacy, 78; Emerson on, 79; ensures success to moderate ability, 79; distinguished from activity, 80; must be well directed, 80; will give success to ill-contrived schemes, 80; necessary in the spiritual life, 80; common lack of, 81; contagious, 82; of bad men, 82; vital in war, 83; of Bajazet, 83; of Hannibal, 83, 84; of Julius Cæsar, 84; of Frederick the Great, 85; of Napoleon, 85; necessary in politics, 85; Queen Elizabeth's, 85; Richelieu's, 85, 86; Lord Chatham's, 85, 86, 88; Lord Palmerston's, 87; Sir Walter Raleigh's, 87; Andrew Jackson's, 87; of "the Mountain" in the French Revolution, 87; essential in oratory, 88; Mirabeau's, 88; of Brougham's oratory, 89; necessary in the learned professions, 89; William Pinkney's, 89; Lord St. Leonards's, 89, 90; De Maistre's, 90; of Bishop Huet, 91; of Arnold of Rugby, 91; of Alexander Pope, 91; Walter Scott's, 92; Leibnitz's, 92; Heyne's, 92; of Burke, Milton, Harriet Martineau, Gibbon, Carey the missionary, and Prof. H. B. Hackett, 92; Gibbon's, 92; indispensable in art, 93; Mendelssohn's, 93; Handel's, 93; on the stage, 93; of great business men, 95; of A. T. Stewart, 95; of Thomas Fowell Buxton, 95, 96; of Sir C. J. Napier, 96; should be joined to sound judgment, 97; of Kean the elder, 94; mistakes concerning it, 171, 172; does not imply violence, 171; defined, 172; an antidote to life's ills, 277.
- England, her stubborn pertinacity in war, 160.
- Erskine, Thomas, 26; his start at the bar, 291, 292.
- Etiquette, 201.
- Evarts, W. M., his power of endurance, 44.
- Failure in life, its causes, 9, 74.
- Fame, Amiel on, 215.
- Farragut, Admiral, his decision, 119.
- Faust, Dr. Johann, his discovery of the art of printing, 23, 26.
- Fénelon, his cheerfulness, 254.
- Field, Cyrus, his patient persistence, 179.
- Fielding, John, his cheerfulness, 254.
- Find out your weak points, 315-319.
- Fontenelle, 36.
- Fowler, Scotch brewer, 242.
- Franklin, Benjamin, his integrity, 311; on self-reliance, 341.
- Frederick the Great, on good and bad fortune, 20; his energy, 85; an early riser, 285.
- Frederick William, emperor of Germany, his patience, 183.
- Froude, James Anthony, on occupations, 300.
- Fuller, Thomas, D. D., on cheerfulness, 389.
- Gage, Lyman J., 31, 262.
- Gainsborough, Thomas, 33.
- Galton, Francis, quoted, 21.
- Garfield, President James A., bets on his life, 175; canal boy, 379.
- Garrison, William Lloyd, his persistence, 151.
- Genius, its connection with disease, 61; indefinable, 78; the best kind, 82; William Wirt on, 82; does not dispense with labor, 82; for hard work, 154; great works ascribed to it, 164; "a miracle of," 164; the old ideas of it, 164, 165; its essence is capacity for work, 165, 166; its works not the product of leisure, 232.
- Genlis, Madame de, anecdote of, 233.
- Giardini, violinist, 334.
- Gibbon, Edward, 62; his energy, 92; his pluck, 144; his monumental history, 144; an early riser, 281.
- Girard, Stephen, his singleness of purpose, 75.
- Girondists, their lack of energy, 87, 102.
- Gladstone, on concentration, 68; his acquisition of practical talent, 210; as a worker, 275, 276.
- God, the Scandinavian and Greek contrasted, 128.

- Goethe, his good fortune, 21; his long life and affluence, 21; on the effect of environment on success, 21; on concentration, 68; on hurry, 331; on cheerfulness, 388; on positiveness, 389.
- Goldsmith, his "Vicar of Wakefield," 242; anecdote by, 288.
- Good, Mason, M. D., his translation of Lucretius, 233.
- Good breeding, 20.
- Goodness, half-hearted, 104.
- Grant, General Ulysses, 15; his persistency, 146; dull in youth, 382.
- Gray, Thomas, his shyness, 360.
- Great men, their self-knowledge, 29, 33; their self-trust, 131, 132.
- Great souls are positive and creative, 389.
- Green, J. R., historian, 56; his wretched health, 103.
- Gregory VII., pontiff, 56.
- Grimaldi, 254.
- Guidi, Tommaso, painter, dull in youth, 382.
- Habits, their formation, 173-177; their power, 173, 174; Carlyle on, 173; their rapid growth, 173, 174; Professor James on, 174; Dr. Combe on, 175; their tenacity illustrated, 175; their beneficent effects, 176, 177.
- Hackett, Professor H. B., his intense energy, 92.
- Half-heartedness, fatal to success, 150.
- Hall, John, D. D., on a lowly condition, 96.
- Hall, Robert, D. D., his physical sufferings, 45, 56, 57; depressed by Cambridge scenery, 256; his early failure as preacher, 297.
- Handel, 29; his energy, 93.
- Handwriting, bad, hinders success, 370.
- Hannibal, Juvenal on, 7; his energy, 84.
- Havelock, Sir Henry, 262.
- Haydn, composer, 29.
- Haydon, Benjamin R., painter, his failure in his profession, 32, 33.
- Hazlitt, William, on persistence, 149; on genius and labor, 166; quoted, 236.
- Health, bodily and mental, 41-53; a fundamental condition of success, 41; necessary in war and the learned professions, 42-43; eminent men who have exhausted it, 43; not muscular strength, 44; is vitality, 44; the kind needed for success in life, 43, 44; miseries of great men who have lacked it, 45, 46; a duty, 46-53; within our control, 46, 47; effects of bad, 47; needful to a Christian, 48; a duty of public men, 48; ill, a cause of bad theology and ethics, 50; conduces to longevity, 51; perpetuates itself to future generations, 51; and literary success, 61; a requisite of good generalship, 64.
- Henry of Navarre, his hopefulness, 390.
- Heredity, its influence on success, 20; Emerson on it, 21.
- Heyne, Christian Gottlob, his humble beginning, 303.
- History, labor of writing it, 163.
- Holland, Sir Henry, on Palmerston's energy, 87.
- Holmes, Dr. O. W., on Professor Hackett's energy, 93.
- Hopefulness, its value, 387, 391; as an element of worldly success, 387-389; necessary to a statesman, 388; essential in the religious life, 389; Cromwell's, 390; Sir John Malcolm's, 390; Nelson's, 390; of Henry of Navarre, 390; Luther's, 390.
- Horace, his poverty, 342.
- Horner, Francis, the force of his character, 311.
- Hugo, Victor, on lack of will, 79.
- Hunter, John, 29.
- Illiberal men, their shrewdness imaginary, 243; their false estimates of mankind, 243; not thrifty, 244.
- Impatience, to "go ahead," 107; its evils, 180, 181; a universal trait, 181; of men with themselves, 182.
- Imperiali, Cardinal, on Fortune, 261.
- Indecision, of Louis XVI. and Louis Philippe, 117; in war, 119.
- Indolence, its miseries, 276, 277.
- Inness, painter, on intuitions, 83.
- Inscription, on a house in Edinburgh, 157.
- Integrity, appreciated by knaves, 309.
- Invalids, their achievements, 54-66; need not be idle, 65.
- Inventions, unfinished, in U. S. Patent Office, 74.

- Inventors, their rewards to-day, 4; their luck, 26.
- Jackson, Andrew, his energy, 87.
- Jeffrey, Lord, on James Watts's attainments, 58.
- Johnson, Dr. Samuel, saying of, 47; his ill-health, 56, 62; on the "man of one book," 110; on the word "no," 120; on external advantages, 198; on complaints of neglect, 211; his melancholy, 257; an author by necessity, 342; his poverty, 379.
- Jones, Sir William, a dunce at school, 382.
- Jordan, president of Leland Stanford Junior University, his salary, 345.
- Jowett, Benjamin, D.D., on shyness, 360.
- Juvenal, on the vanity of wealth, eloquence, etc., 7.
- Kane, Dr. Elisha Kent, his frailty and feats of endurance, 44; his invalidism and his exploits, 59.
- Kaye, Sir John William, on success, 8.
- Kean, Edmund, his energy on the stage, 94; Macready on his Richard III., 94; his "barn-storming," 141.
- Kemble, John, anecdote of, 372.
- Kenyon, Lord Chief Justice, 14; his indigence in youth, 378.
- Kirby, his advice to a young surgeon, 302.
- Lacordaire, Jean Baptiste Henri, his early failures as preacher, 297; his life a failure, 313.
- Lafitte, Paris banker, 242, 368.
- Lamb, Charles, on no work and overwork, 276, 277.
- Lassay, M., saying of, 388.
- Laurier, Sir Wilfred, on the gift of plodding, 147, 148.
- Law, the, a jealous mistress, 72.
- Lawyers, various plans of study of eminent, 13; why many fail, 76.
- Leaves, utilized in Paris, 226.
- Lecky, W. E. H., on dependence of success on character, 114.
- Lee, Samuel, D.D., "the learned carpenter," his remarkable history, 133, 137; his difference from other youths, 137.
- L'Ecure, dentist, 22.
- Lewes, George Henry, his *Life of Goethe*, 152.
- Leyden, John, M. D., his early death, 45; his poverty, 378.
- Liberality, in business, 240-244; always "pays," 241.
- Liddon, Canon, 33.
- Liebig, Justus von, his dullness at school, 382.
- Linnæus, naturalist, 379.
- Lions in the way, 344-348.
- Literature, by whom and how its masterpieces are produced, 102; importance of its details, 247.
- Literary men, their lack of practical talent, 208.
- Littledale, Richard F., D. D., his writings, 63.
- Little things, their importance, 245-250, 368; too often despised, 245; in war, 247, 248; in professional callings, 248; their effect on happiness, 249; Amiel, on their importance, 249; how viewed by great men, 249.
- Littre, Maximilian Paul Emile, 379.
- "Live men wanted," 99-105; wanted in the professions and in trade, 99, 100; needed in the churches, 100; their spiritual growth, 104.
- Livingstone, Edward, loss of his Code for Louisiana, 156.
- Locke, John, his industry, 90.
- Longfellow, Henry W., on the talent of success, 14; on "the insanity of noble minds," 104.
- Lorraine, Claude, 29; his patient toils, 166.
- Lowell, James Russell, quoted, 308.
- Loyola, Ignatius, 192.
- Luck, good and bad, 18-27; complaints of the lack of it, 18; only apparent, 19; believed in by great men, 19-20; Cicero on that of Roman generals, 20; Frederick the Great on, 20; Cromwell's belief in, 20; Napoleon on his own; Rothschild on, 20; of a seaman at Santiago, 22; strange instances of, 22; famous men helped by, 23; Marmont on, 24; Cobden on, 24; Caesar's real, 24; of Napoleon and Nelson, 25; when useless, 25; Addison on, 25.

- Luther, Martin, anecdote of, 390, 391.
 Lutzen, battle of, 42.
- Macaulay, T. B., on the curse of England, 32; on Lord Chatham's energy, 86; on his concentration of effort, 69; on British valor, 75; an economist of time, 238; his advice to Macvey Napier, 236; on Shrewsbury and Peterborough, 251; on early rising, 283; on his seat in Parliament, 311.
- Macdonough, the hero of Lake Champlain, 75.
- Macready, actor, his painstaking, 112.
- Maintenon, Madame de, 346.
- Malcolm, Sir John, 390.
- Mann, Horace, on his poor health, 63.
- Manner, its potency, 195-202; Robert South on, 196; Bulwer on, 196; its lack neutralizes the best gifts, 196; the charm of C. J. Fox's, 199; improved by culture, 200.
- Marden, Dr. O. S., on to-day's opportunities for success, 264.
- Marius, Caius, 208.
- Marmont, Marshal, on fortune, 24.
- Martin, Sir Theodore, an economist of minutes, 235.
- Martineau, Harriet, her activity, 92.
- Martyn, Henry, missionary, 50.
- Martyr, Justin, 23.
- Mason, Jeremiah, 14.
- Mason, Dr. J. M., saying of, 48.
- Masterpieces, of literary genius, 110.
- Mastery, falling short of, 73.
- Meanness, suicidal, 240; in business dealings, 240, 241.
- Mellick, Andrew D., Junior, 67.
- Men for whom the world is a prey, 11.
- Mendelssohn, composer, his precocity, 33; his energy, 93; his industry, 166.
- Meredith, Owen, his "Lucile" quoted, 35.
- Mermeros, Persian general, 102.
- Mill, John Stuart, his despondency, 51.
- Millionaires, on the secret of their wealth, 11; their humble beginnings, 303.
- Mills, D. O., capitalist, saying of, 128.
- Milton, John, his energy, 92.
- Mirabeau, his oratorical force, 89, 90.
- Misers, of ideas, 238.
- "Modest merit," complaints of its neglect, 214; Sydney Smith on, 214.
- Molière, his melancholy, 254.
- Moltke, von, General, 15.
- Money, a root of good, 3; the talent for making it not explicable, 11; chances to make to-day, 351-354.
- Montesquieu, 36.
- Moor, Professor, 379.
- Moore, Frankfort, author, 152.
- Moralists, on "the vanity of human wishes," 7.
- Morley, John, M. P., his political pessimism, 388.
- Morse, Samuel F. P., inventor, his poverty, 378.
- Mozart, his reply to a would-be composer, 132, 133.
- Murillo, 29.
- Murray, Alexander, linguist, 378.
- Murray (Lord Mansfield), 13, 291.
- Napier, Sir Charles James, his studies of the art of war, 15; the motive of their inspiration, 15; his campaigns in Scinde, 15, 16; his energy in old age, 96; his defiance of difficulties, 96; work his element, 101; in the battle of Meeanee, 101; his early studies, 263; his letter to a young officer, 349.
- Napoleon, on his own generalship, 10; his faith in his "star," 20; on military science, 20; on the necessity of health to a military leader, 64; crippled by his illnesses, 65; his energy, 85; on indolence of men, 101; sayings of, 85, 118, 119; on panics in battle, 188; on the way battles are won, 191; on inspirations in battle, 191; on Laplace, 203; his attention to details, 247.
- Nelson, Lord, 66; his cheerfulness, 390.
- Newton, Sir Isaac, 45; his pluck, 140; sayings of, 155.
- Nicole and Arnauld, on rest, 91.
- Nicoll, Alexander, 45.
- No chance to get on, 348-354.
- "No," its importance, 20.
- Northcote, painter, anecdote of, 341.
- Note-books, their utility, 238; Locke's, 238.

- Oberlin College, its president on "short cuts" in education, 335.
- Omar, Caliph, 310.
- Opportunity, 260-266; its coyness, 261; its value, 263; Daniel Webster's preparation for a great one, 263; Sir C. J. Napier's preparation for the same, 263; for success to-day, 264, 265; verses on it, 269; for rising in the world, 350; for money-making, 351; inattention to it, 371.
- Optimists, 253.
- Orinoco, the river, 81.
- Ostervald, banker, 297.
- Over-education, its evils, 205-207.
- Ovid, quoted, 288.
- Park, Edwards A., D. D., on Professor Hackett's energy, 93.
- Parker, Theodore, beginning of his library, 303.
- Parkhurst, Charles H., D. D., 150.
- Pascal, 56.
- Patience, its value, 178-183; its value to a prime minister, 178; needed in all professions, 179; Cyrus Field's, 179; lacking in rapid men, 180; necessary to leadership, 180; needed by nations, 181; with one's self, 182; of great men, 183.
- Payson, Edward, D. D., his beginning as preacher, 297.
- Peel, Sir Robert, 70; his generosity to employees, 242; his boyish speeches, 297.
- Pentathletes, of Greece, 72.
- Persistence, its achievements, 154.
- Pertinacity, its value, 74, 75.
- Pessimism, a foe to success, 388.
- Piety, personal, affected by bodily health, 48.
- Pinkney, William, 14.
- Pitt, William, a successful man, 8, 9; his precocity, 30; his overwork, 43; an invalid, 59; his preparation for his career, 109; on a premier's need of patience, 178; his readiness, 190; on C. J. Fox, 199.
- Pluck, 138-145; Nassau William Senior's, 138; Martin A. Quinn's, 139; wins life's battles, 140; of Athanasius, 140; Sir Isaac Newton's, 140; Liebig's, 140; of a Scotch glower's apprentice, 140, 141; Edison's, 140; Curran's, 140, 142; of the first Earl of Shaftesbury, 142; of Marshal Massena, 143; of Blücher, 143; of the Swedes at Lutzen, 143; of General George H. Thomas, 143; of Milton, Parkman, Balzac, and Bulwer, 144; Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler on it, 145.
- Poems, great ones the product of toil, 162, 163.
- Politeness, George G. Williams, bank-president on it, 199; defined, 201, 202; how attainable, 201, 202.
- Poole, Matthew, 156.
- Pope, Alexander, connection of his invalidism with his literary genius, 62; his activity, 90; his energy, 91.
- Porpora, composer, and his pupil, Caffarelli, 305.
- Poussin, painter, on his own thoroughness, 111.
- Poverty, its tendency to aggravate itself, 288; no bar to success, 377-380.
- Practical talent, 203-210; defined, 203; Laplace's lack of it, 203; Napoleon's, 204; Julius Caesar's, 204; C. J. Napier's, 204; excessive training unfavorable to it, 206; Amiel's lack of it, 207; lacking in literary men, 208, 209; essential to worldly success, 209; Gladstone's acquisition of it, 209, 210.
- Prentiss, Sergeant, his oratory, 30, 31; his sensual habits, 43.
- Procrastination, its evils, 192.
- Punctuality, 372; Charles M. Schwab on its profitableness, 373-375; of Washington and Wellington, 375; of Lord Brougham, 375.
- Pythagoras, quoted, 130.
- Quinn, Martin A., his early life, 138-140.
- Raleigh, his courtesy to Queen Elizabeth, 262.
- Readiness, its value, 184-194; in war, 185; Julius Caesar's, 185; of Constantine the Great, 186; of Julian, "the Apostate," 186; of Napoleon, 186; General McLellan's lack of it, 186; Nelson on it, 188; in professional life, 188; in debate, 188; Pym's, 190; William Pitt's, in journalism, 190; in busi-

- ness, 190; of Ignatius Loyola, 192;
Sir John Sinclair's, 193; an intuition,
193; improved by culture, 194; Amiel
on it, 194.
- Reading, ten pages a day, 246, 247.
- Redesdale, Lord, on successful lawyers,
37.
- Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 33.
- Rhodes, Cecil, 63.
- Rice, Allen T., quoted, 120.
- Richelieu, his energy, 45, 85.
- Richter, Jean Paul, his commonplace-
books, 91; on poverty, 380.
- Riley, James Whitcomb, on his struggles
as a writer, 153.
- Robertson, Rev. Frederic W., on good-
ness and earnestness, 104; on religious
hopefulness, 389.
- Roche foucauld, La, 51.
- Rogers, Samuel, his early poems, 297.
- Romilly, Sir Samuel, his early career,
292.
- Ross, Sir John, 37.
- Rothschild, on unlucky men, 20.
- "Ruined," when a misnomer of the
bankrupt, 384, 385.
- Rush, Benjamin, M. D., his literary in-
dustry, 234.
- Ruskin, his start as a writer, 296.
- Sainte-Beuve, on a fault of Fénelon,
120.
- St. Leonards, Lord, his habits of study,
70; his energy, 89, 90.
- Salaries, some great ones, 4.
- Salvini, actor, a great worker, 94.
- Sampson, Admiral, on a seaman's luck
at Santiago, 92.
- Sand, George, on English shyness, 359.
- Saunders, Edmund, 13; his early life,
298.
- Scarlett, Sir James, erroneous saying of,
129.
- Scarron, 254.
- Schwab, Charles M., his address at a
trade school quoted, 371.
- Schliemann, palæontologist, 379.
- Scotch writer criticises writers on suc-
cess, 1, 2.
- Scott, Sir Walter, his advice to a young
man, 24; on chance, 34; his ill health,
45; his energy, 92; an early riser, 281;
his humble start as a romancer, 295;
a dunce at school, 383; anecdote of,
383; on his bankruptcy, 386.
- Secker, Archbishop, quoted, 342.
- Self-advertising not unprofessional to-
day, 214.
- Self-assurance, 211-217; Bacon on, 211;
Sir James Stephen on, 211; Milton on,
212; why needed to-day, 212; why
preferable to diffidence, 212; Amiel
on, 213; allied with better qualities,
215.
- Self-confidence, like faith in religion,
216; essential to virtue, 216.
- Self-culture, excuses for its neglect, 236.
- Self-development, the work of civiliza-
tion, 125, 126.
- Self-examination, 317-319; why needful
in youth, 318, 319; its advantages,
318, 319.
- "Self-Formation," quoted, 383, 384.
- Self-Reliance, Mendelssohn on, 73; on
imitation, 73; its importance, 125,
130; Herschel and Sidney on, 125;
Bismarck's, 128.
- Sensitiveness, excessive a foe to success,
376.
- Sepoys, the, on the luck of their con-
querors, 25.
- Shaftesbury, the first earl of, his inva-
lidism and his activity, 59; his pluck,
142; Dryden on his bodily decay, 280.
- Sharp, Richard, saying of, 119.
- Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, his intem-
perance and overwork, 43; his lack of
character, 313; at school, 382.
- "Short Cuts," 333; American love of,
333; in college education, 335; to
trades, 336; R. W. Emerson on,
337; in the acquisition of knowledge,
338, 339.
- Shyness, a foe to success, 355-367; its
causes, 355; Archbishop Whately's,
356, 365; letter of a youth afflicted
with it, 357; a Gothic quality, 357;
the author's, 357, 358; a trait of Eng-
lishmen, 359; Dr. Jowett on it, 360;
its effects, 360; Addison's, 360; Cow-
per's, 361; the poet Gray's, 361; Syd-
ney Smith's, 361, 365; William Wirt's,
362, 365; Lord Chesterfield on his own,
362, 366; Charles Mathews's, 362; Sir
James Stephen's, 363; Nathaniel Haw-
thorne's, 363; Theodore Parker's, 363;

- Mark Pattison's, 363; of a Scottish peer, 364; of an English nobleman, 364; William Hazlitt's, 364; how overcome, 365-367; its compensations, 367.
- Sibyl, legend of a Roman, 260.
- Sinclair, Sir John, his economy of time, 234.
- Small beginnings, 294-306; of nature's productions, 300; Herbert Spencer on them, 301; the law of the universe, 304.
- Smeaton, John, engineer, 29, 30.
- Smith, Sydney, on persistent toil, 157; on "miracles of genius," 164; on habitual vice, 176; his cheerfulness, 255; his shyness, 361, 365.
- Socrates, on men's self-ignorance, 310.
- Somers, Lord Chancellor, on searching old records, 113.
- Southey, Robert, 46.
- Spectral discouragements, 377-386.
- Spelling, bad hinders success, 369.
- Spencer, Herbert, on small beginnings, 301.
- Sports, the competitive spirit in them, 54, 55.
- Spurgeon, Rev. Charles, on dead men in churches, 100.
- Stanley, Arthur, D.D., his first discourse, 297.
- Starting in a calling, 287-293; its difficulties, 287-291; how obtained, 291.
- Statesmen, how made, 131.
- Stephenson, George, 208; his locomotive, 74.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis, 61.
- Stewart, A. T., merchant, 95.
- Stirling, Maxwell, Sir William, 235.
- Story, Joseph, 14.
- Stowe, Mrs. H. B., on persistence, 149.
- Students in college, the most successful, 315.
- Study, orderly sequence in, 231.
- Success in life, its value and difficulty, 1-17; essential to the common weal, 2; reviled as an imposture, 2; motives that impel men to seek it, 2, 3; its advantages, 3; what it means to educated men, 3; its rewards never before so dazzling or so hard to win, 4, 6; demands sterling qualities, 6; defined, 6-8; eminent men interviewed on it, 9, 10; qualities needed for it, 9, 11, 12; a personal attribute, 11; considered practically, 12; diverse modes of winning it, 12, 13; Longfellow on the talent for it, 14; should it be the direct object of effort? 14-16; the finest won slowly, 299, 302; exceptions to this law, 202; demands tact and practical talent, 209; quick not desirable, 348; little hindrances to it, 368-376; the N. Y. Tribune on it, 376.
- Successful men, their ideal qualities, 11, 12; their opposite qualities, 13, 14; hard workers, 83.
- Suetonius on Cæsar, 107.
- Suicide, its celebrated victims, 46.
- Sumner, Charles, his message to Stanton, 150.
- Swift, Dean, his brain disease, 45; his friend Stafford, 206; on men's self-ignorance, 215; at the University, 382.
- Symonds, John Addington, his achievements in ill health, 60.
- Talbot, Lord Chancellor, saying of, 129.
- Talent for work, 162-172; more important than brilliant abilities, 162; Turner's, 166; Mendelssohn's, 166; Hume, the historian's, 166; of Burke, Leibnitz, Cicero, and Milton, 166; Dickens's, 167; of the Empress of Austria, 167; Sir Walter Raleigh's, 168; John Hunter's, 168; Edison's, 168; Palmerston's, 170; Gladstone's, 170; Macaulay's, 171; Bulwer's, 171; Dr. Thomas Arnold's, 171; mediocre, not a bar to success, 381; disadvantages of brilliant, 381.
- Talfourd, T. N., barrister, 72.
- Talleyrand, on Alexander Hamilton, 109.
- Taney, Chief Justice, his study of the law, 336.
- Tastes, 37.
- Taylor, Jeremy, his cheerfulness, 254.
- Teachers, their neglect of blockheads, 290.
- Tenacity of purpose, 146, 161; the index of a man's power, 146; Emerson on, 146; Lincoln on General Grant's, 146; Sir Wilfred Laurier on, 147, 148; effects of its lack, 148, 149; Hazlitt on, 148, 149; William Carey's,

- 151; William L. Garrison's, 151; Buffon's, 153; Arkwright's, 154; Audubon's, 155; Carlyle's, 156; Ainsworth's, 156; Edward Livingstone's, 156; Sydney Smith on it, 157; England's in war, 160; of the Americans in the War of Independence, 160.
- Tencin, Madame de, on rebuffs, 197.
- Tenterden, Lord, his irritability, 49.
- Thackeray, his struggles, 262.
- "The new cut," 267-274; opposed in all callings, 269; its prevalence to-day, 269; examples of it, 270; evils of its neglect, 270; in teaching, 271; in journalism, 272; in oratory, 273; in the clerical profession, 273.
- "Tholing," its wisdom, 158.
- Thomas, General George H., his pluck in the Civil War, 143.
- Thoreau, Henry D., quoted, 100.
- Thoroughness, 106-113; lack of it causes failures in business, 106; also in professional careers, 107; its advantages, 108; fitful attempts at it, 108; Emerson on it, 108; of great artists and writers, 109; William Pitt's, 109; Alexander Hamilton's, 109, 110; of the "man of one book," 110; Dr. Channing on his own, 110; Turner's, 110; Poussin's, 110; Macready's, 111, 112; of American naval captains, 112; Dr. J. F. Clarke on, 112.
- Thorwaldsen, the sculptor, his despair and sudden success, 16.
- Thurlow, Lord, his idleness, 13; on success at the bar, 129; his treatment of Eldon, 130.
- Time, at man's command in seventy years, 229; its parts connected, 230; necessity of economizing it, 230; most precious in youth, 230; utilizing its fractions, 231, 232, 236, 237; famous economists of it, 232-236; Lavater on it, 238.
- Titian, his laboriousness, 156.
- Toil, of great artists and authors, 165; its compensations, 277; William Morris on, 275; its blessedness, 275-286.
- Torstenson, Swedish general, an invalid, 66; his rapid movements, 102.
- Traveler, anecdote of an American, 331, 332.
- Trials at school and in life, 346.
- "Tribune," New York, on the secret of success, 375.
- Trifles, their influence, 317.
- Trollope, Mrs. Frances, an early riser, 282.
- Troubles, small, 258.
- Turner, painter, his thoroughness, 111; on the secret of his mastery, 166.
- Unity of aim, 67-77; Goethe and Emerson on, 67, 72; Aristotle on his own, 67, 68; Gladstone on, 68; Bulwer's, 70; Lord St. Leonards on his own, 70; Stephen Girard's, 75.
- Vacillation, its evils, 74, 75.
- Velpeau, surgeon, 379.
- Versatility, its dangers, 71, 75.
- Waiting, hard for beginners, 179; De Maistre on, 183.
- Walpole, on the gaming at "White's," 175.
- Walpole, Sir Robert, 208.
- Ward, Artemus, saying of, 184.
- Warner, Charles Dudley, on instruction at clubs, 337.
- Washington, his weight of character, 311.
- Wastefulness, American, 218-220; its causes, 220, 221; of the poor, 221; of British workmen, 221, 222; from bad cooking, 221, 222; its cost, 223; science protests against it, 225.
- Watt, James, his fragile constitution, 58; his encyclopædic knowledge, 58, 59; his condensing engine, 74; his early career, 298.
- Wealth, of economy, 217-228.
- Wealth, in spare moments, 229-239.
- Webster, Daniel, his preparation for his reply to Hayne, 23, 26; his early study of the U. S. Constitution, 30; his saying to a young lawyer, 40; his argument in the case of Gibbons vs. Odgen, 42; his appointment to clerkship of Court of Common Pleas, 76; his contests with Jeremiah Mason, 130, 346; his self-distrust in youth, 212; an early riser, 282; on the legal profession, 290; rejects offer of a clerkship, 300.
- Wedderburn (Lord Loughborough), 13.

- Weed, Thurlow, his early struggles, 378.
- Wellington, Duke of, 15 ; his attention to little things, 248 ; a dunce in youth, 382.
- Wesley, Charles, an economist of time, 234.
- West, Benjamin, painter, 29.
- Westbury, Lord Chancellor, his early choice of a calling, 30.
- Whately, Richard, D. D., and Nassau, William Senior, 138, 139 ; his shyness, 356, 365.
- Wheeler, Mrs. Ella, on her contributions to periodicals, 152.
- Will, strength of, and decision, 114, 124 ; is capable of culture, 121 ; has a moral as well as physical basis, 121 ; Dr. J. F. Clarke on, 123 ; William Wirt on, 123 ; Lamennais on, 124.
- Wilkie, Sir David, his toil, 156.
- William, Earl of Nassau, his courtesy, 198.
- William, King of England, 59.
- Wilson, Henry, Vice-President of United States, his start in life, 298, 299 ; his early struggles, 378, 379.
- Winship, Dr., "apostle of muscularity," 44.
- Wirt, William, on the genius for hard work, 82 ; on his legal contest with Pinkney, 190 ; on the legal profession, 343 ; his shyness, 362, 365.
- Wolfe, James, General, 45 ; conqueror of Quebec, 66.
- Wolseley, Lord, on his own earnestness, 79.
- Wordsworth, quoted 159.
- Work, when man's best is done, 51 ; out of business hours, 52, 53 ; professional, exacts hard labor, 82 ; slovenly, 107 ; miseries of men who have none, 276 ; a remedy for ailments, 277 ; invigorates the brain, 278 ; the best hours for it, 281-284.
- Working by rule, 320-325.
- Worry, 275.
- Ziska, Hussite leader, 65.

The Riverside Press

*Electrotyped and printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.
Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.*

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